

# THE LIVING AGE:

A Weekly Magazine of Contemporary Literature and Thought.

(FOUNDED BY E. LITTELL IN 1844.)

SEVENTH SERIES.  
VOLUME X.

NO. 2950. JAN. 19, 1901.

FROM BEGINNING  
Vol. CCXXVIII.

---

## THE WORKS OF LORD BYRON.\*

"When the year 1900 is turned and our nation comes to recount her poetic glories in the century which has then just ended, the first names will be Wordsworth and Byron." Thus wrote Matthew Arnold in 1881, and now that the century's last autumn is passing away, a new edition of Byron's works appears in the fulness of time to quicken our memories and rekindle our curiosity, by placing before us a complete record of the life, letters and poetry of one whom Macaulay declared in 1830 to be the most celebrated Englishman of the nineteenth century, and who, seventy years later, may still be counted among its most striking and illustrious figures.

As the new edition is issued by instalments, and several volumes are still to come, to compare its contents, arrangement and the editorial accessories with those of preceding editions might be thought premature. We may say, however, that a large number of Byron's letters, not before printed, have now been added; and that the text of this new material has been prepared from originals, whereas it is now impossible so to collate the text

of the greater number of the letters heretofore published. Moore is supposed to have destroyed many of those entrusted to him, and, moreover, he handled the originals very freely, making large omissions, and transposing passages from one letter to another, though we presume he did not re-write and amplify passages after the fashion in which certain French editors have dealt with recent memoirs. The letters, now for the first time published by Mr. Murray, were for the most part inaccessible to Moore. But for all these details we may refer our readers to the concise and valuable prefaces appended to the three volumes of Letters and Journals.

We have now, therefore, a substantial acquisition of fresh and quite authentic material, though it would be rash to assume that all important documents are included, for the family archives are still held in reserve. It is admitted by the editor that the literary value of the letters now printed for the first time is not high, but he explains that in publishing with a few exceptions, the whole available correspondence, he has acted on the principle that they form an aggregate collection of great biographical interest, and may thus serve as the best substitute for the lost memoirs. We may agree that any scrap of a great man's writ-

\* The Works of Lord Byron: a New, Revised, and Enlarged Edition.—"Letters and Journals." Edited by Rowland E. Prothero, M. A. "Poetry." Edited by Ernest Hartley Coleridge, M.A. London: John Murray, 1898.

ing, or even any words spoken, may throw some light upon his character, whether the subject be trivial or tremendous, a business letter to his solicitor or a defiance of society; for even though careless readers chance to miss some pearl strung at random on a string of commonplaces, to the higher criticism nothing is quite valueless. In this instance, at any rate, no pains have been spared to place the real Lord Byron, as described more or less unconsciously by himself, before his fellow-countrymen; and the result is to confirm his reputation as a first-class letter-writer. The private and confidential correspondence of eminent literary men would be usually more decorous than interesting; but Byron, though he is not always respectable, is never dull. The correspondence and journals, taken all together, constitute the most interesting and characteristic collection of its kind in English literature.

In regard to the effect upon his personal reputation, we have long known what manner of man was Byron. Nor is it likely that, after passing in review the complete array of evidence collected in these volumes, the general verdict of posterity will be sensibly modified. Those who judge him should bear in mind that perhaps no famous life has ever been so thoroughly laid bare or scrutinized with greater severity. The tendency of biographers is to soften down errors and praise where they can; and in an autobiography the writer can tell his own story. But the assiduous searching out and publication of every letter and diary that can be gathered or gleaned is a different ordeal, which might try the reputation of most of us; while in the case of an impulsive, wayward, high-spirited man, exposed to strong temptations, with all a poet's traditional irritability, whose rank and genius concentrated public attention on his writ-

ings from his early youth, this test must be extremely severe. Many of the letters are of a sort that do not ordinarily appear in a biography. Byron's letters to his wife at the time of their separation, which are moderate and even dignified, are supplemented by his wife's letters to him and to her friends, full of mysterious imputations; and there are letters to and from the lady with whom his *liaison* was notorious. His own reckless letters from Venice to Moore, and those from Shelley and others describing his dissipated habits, were clearly never intended for general reading after his death. Of course most of these are not now produced for the first time, nor do we argue that they ought never to have appeared, for the biographical interest is undeniable. Our point is that the publication of such private and damaging correspondence is so very unusual in biographies that it places Byron at a special disadvantage, and that when we pass our judgment upon him we are bound to take into account the unsparing use that has been made of papers connected with the most intimate transactions of a lifetime which was no more than a short and stormy passage from youth to manhood; for he was cut off before the age at which men abandon the wild ways of their springtide, and are usually disposed to obliterate the record of them. At least one recent biography might be mentioned which would have read differently if it had been compiled with similar candor.

The annotations subjoined to almost every page of the text are so ample and particular as to furnish in themselves extensive reading. The notices of every person named would go far to serve as a brief biographical dictionary of Byron's contemporaries, whether known or unknown to fame. We get a concise account of Madame de Staël—her birth, books and political opinions

—very useful to those who had no previous acquaintance with her. Lady Morgan and Joanna Southcote obtain quite as much space as would be allotted to them in any handbook of celebrities. Beau Brummell and Lord Castlereagh are treated with similar liberality. There is a full account taken from the Examiner, of the procession with which Louis XVIII made his entry into London in 1814. The notes—of about four pages each—upon Hobhouse and Lord Carlisle may be justified by their close connection with Byron's affairs; though some of us might have been content with less. Allusions to such notorious evildoers as Tarquin are explained, and stock quotations from Shakespeare have been carefully verified. The result is that a reader might go through this edition of Byron with the very slightest previous knowledge of general literature or of contemporary history, and might give himself a very fair middle-class education in the process, although the consequence might be to imbue him with what Coleridge has called "a passion for the disconnected." Nevertheless we readily acknowledge the thorough execution of this part of the editorial work, and the very meritorious labor that has been spent upon bringing together every kind of document and reference that can inform or enlighten us upon the main subjects of Byron's life and writings. In the poems the practice of giving in notes the rough drafts and rejected versions of passages and lines, so as to show the poet at work, seems to us not altogether fair to him, and is occasionally distracting to those readers who enjoy a fine picture without asking how the colors were mixed or are not anxious about the secrets of a good dinner. Yet to students of method, to the fellow-craftsman, and to the literary virtuoso, these variant readings, of which there are sometimes four to a single line,

may often be of substantial interest, as throwing light on the tendencies and predilections of taste which are the formative influences upon style in prose or poetry.

Probably the most favorable circumstance for a poet is that he should only be known like the Divinity of Nature, from his works; or at least that, like Wordsworth, he should keep the noiseless tenor of his way down some secluded vale of life, whereby his poems stand out in clear relief like fine paintings on a plain wall. Is there any modern English poet of the first class, except Byron, whose entire prose writings and biography are bound up in standard editions with his poetry? The question is, at any rate, worth asking, because certainly there is no case in which the record of a poet's private life and personal fortunes has so greatly affected, for good or for ill, his poetic reputation. Those who detested his character and condemned his way of living found it difficult to praise his verses; they detected the serpent under every stone. For those who were fascinated by the picture of a reckless prodigal, always in love and in debt, with fierce passions and a haughty contempt for the world, who defied public opinion and was suspected of unutterable things—such a personality added enormous zest to his poetry. But now that Byron's whole career has been once more laid out before his countrymen with light poured on to it from every cranny and peephole, those who take up this final edition of his life and works must feel that their main object and duty should be to form an unbiassed estimate of the true value, apart from the author's rank and private history, of poems which must always hold a permanent place in the high imaginative literature of England.

It may be said that every writer of force and originality traverses two

phases of opinion before his substantive rank in the great order of merit is definitely fixed; he is either depressed or exalted unduly. He may be neglected or cheapened by his own generation, and praised to the skies by posterity; or his fame may undergo the inverse treatment, until he settles down to his proper level. Byron's reputation has passed through sharper vicissitudes than have befallen most of his contemporaries; for though no poet has ever shot up in a brief lifetime to a higher pinnacle of fame, or made a wider impression upon the world around him, after his death he seems to have declined slowly, in England, to a point far below his real merits. And at this moment there is no celebrated poet, perhaps no writer, in regard to whom the final judgment of critics and men of letters is so imperfectly determined. Here is a man whom Goethe accounted a character of unique eminence, with supreme creative power, whose poetry, he admitted, had influenced his own later verse—one of those who gave strenuous impulse to the romantic movement throughout England, France and Germany in the first quarter of this century, who set the fashion of his day in England, stirred and shaped the popular imagination, and struck a far resonant note in our poetry. Yet after his death he suffered a kind of eclipse; his work was much more unduly depreciated than it had been extolled; while in our own time such critics as Matthew Arnold and Mr. Swinburne have been in profound disagreement on the question of his worth and value as a poet. Nor is it possible for impartial persons to accept the judgment of either of these two eminent artists in poetry, since Arnold placed Wordsworth and Byron by anticipation on the same level at this century's end, whereas Wordsworth stands now far higher. And the bitter disdain which Mr. Swinburne has poured upon Byron's verse

and character, though tempered by acknowledgment of his strength and cleverness, and by approbation of his political views, excites some indignation and a sympathetic reaction in his favor. One can imagine the ghost of Byron rebuking his critic with the words of the Miltonic Satan, "Ye knew me once no mate For you, there sitting where ye durst not soar;" for in his masculine defiant attitude and daring flights the elder poet overtops and looks down upon the fine musical artist of our own day.

Some of the causes which have combined to lower Byron's popularity are not far to seek. The change of times, circumstance and taste has been adverse to him. The political school, which he so ardently represented, has done its work; the Tory statesmen of the Metternich and Castlereagh type, who have laid heavy hands upon nations striving for light and liberty, have gone down to their own place; the period of stifling repression has long ended in Europe. Italy and Greece are free, the lofty appeals to classic heroism are out of date, and such fiery high-swalling trumpet notes as

Yet, Freedom! yet thy banner, torn, but  
flying  
Streams like a thunderstorm *against*  
the wind,

fall upon cold and fastidious ears. "The day will come," said Mazzini in after-years, "when the democracy will acknowledge its debt to Byron;" but the demos is notoriously ungrateful, and the subject races have now won their independence. The shadow of discouragement and weariness, which passed over sensitive minds at the beginning of this century, a period of political disillusion, has long been swept away by the prosperity and sanguine activities of the Victorian era; and the literary style has



changed with the times. Melancholy moods, attitudes of scornful despair, tales of fierce love and bloody revenge are strange and improbable to readers who delight in situations and emotions with which they are familiar, who demand exactitude in detail and correct versification; while sweet harmonies, perfection of metre, middle-class pastorals and a blameless moral tone came in with Tennyson. In short, many of the qualities which enchanted Byron's own generation have disenchanted our own, both in his works and his life; for when Macaulay wrote in 1830 that the time would come when his "rank and private history will not be regarded in estimating his poetry," he took no account of future editions enlarged and annotated, or of biographies of "The Real Lord Byron;" whereby it has come to pass, as we suspect, that the present world knows more of Byron's private history than of his poems. His faults and follies stand out more prominently than ever; his story is more attractive reading than most romances; and the stricter morality of the day condemns him more severely than did the society to which he belonged. Psychological speculation is now so much more practised in literature than formerly, there is so much more interest in "the man behind the book," that serious moral delinquencies, authentically recorded and eagerly read, operate more adversely than ever in affecting the public judgment upon Byron's poetry, because they provide a damaging commentary upon it. His contemporaries—Coleridge, Keats, Shelley—lived so much apart from the great world of their day that important changes in manners and social opinion have made much less difference in the standard by which their lives are compared with their work. Their poetry, moreover, was mainly impersonal. Whereas Byron, by stamping his own character on so much of

his verse, created a dangerous interest in the man himself, and his *empeiria* (as Goethe calls it), his too exclusively worldly experience, identified him with his particular class in society, rendering him largely the responsible representative of a libertinism in habits and sentiments that was more pardonable in his time than in our own. His poetry belongs also in another sense to the world he lived in; it is incessantly occupied with current events and circumstances, with Spain, Italy and Greece, as he actually saw them, with comparisons of their visible condition and past glories, with Peninsular battlefields and with Waterloo. Of worldliness in this objective meaning his contemporaries had some share, yet they instinctively avoided the waste of their power upon it; and so their finest poetry is beautiful by its detachment, by a certain magical faculty of treating myth, romance and the mystery of man's sympathetic relations with universal Nature.

A recent French critic of Chateaubriand, who defines the "romantisme" of that epoch as no more than a great waking up of the poetic spirit, says that the movement was moral and psychological generally before it spread into literature. In criticising Byron's poetry we have to bear in mind that he came in on the first wave of this flood, which overflowed the exhausted and arid field of poetry at the end of the last century, fertilizing it with color and emotion. The comparison between Byron in England and Chateaubriand in France must have been often drawn. The similarity in their style, their moody, melancholy outlook upon common humanity, their aristocratic temper, their self-consciousness, their influence upon the literature of the two countries, the enthusiasm that they excited among the ardent spirits of the generation that reached manhood immediately after them, and the vain at-

tempts of the elder critics to resist their popularity and deny their genius—form a remarkable parallel in literary history. As Jeffrey failed at first to discern the promise of Byron, so Morellet could only perceive the obviously weak points of Chateaubriand, laying stress on his affections, his inflated language, his sentimental exaggeration, upon all the faults which were common to these two men of genius, the defects of their qualities, the energetic rebound from the classic level of orderly taste and measured style. It was the ancient *régime* contending against a revolutionary uprising, and in poetry, as in politics, the leaders of revolution are sure to be excessive, to force their notes, to frighten their elders and to scandalize the conservative mind. Yet just as Chateaubriand, after passing through his period of depression, is now rising again to his proper place in French literature, so we may hope that an impartial survey of Byron's verse will help to determine the rank that he is likely to hold permanently, although the high tide of romance in poetry has at this moment fallen to a low ebb, and the spell which it laid upon our forefathers may have lost its power in an altered world.

It must be counted to the credit of these Romantic writers that at any rate they widened and varied the sphere and the resources of their art by introducing the Oriental element, so to speak, into the imaginative literature of modern Europe. They brought the lands of ancient civilization again within the sphere of poetry, reviving into fresh animation the classic glories of Hellas, reopening the gates of the mysterious East, and showing us the Greek races still striving, as they were twenty-two centuries earlier, for freedom against the barbarous strength of an Asiatic empire. Byron was the first of the poets who headed this literary crusade for the succor of Christianity

against Islam in the unending contest between East and West on the shores of the Mediterranean, and in this cause he eventually died. Chateaubriand, Lamartine and Victor Hugo were also travellers in Asia, and had drawn inspiration from that source; they all instinctively obeyed, like Bonaparte, the impulse which sends adventurous and imaginative spirits toward that region of strong passions and primitive manners, where human life is of little matter, and where the tragic situations of drama and fiction may at any time be witnessed in their simple reality. The effect was to introduce fresh blood into the views of old romance; and Byron led the van of an illustrious line of poets who turned their *impressions de voyage* into glowing verse, for the others only trod in his footsteps and wrote on his model, while Lamartine openly imitated him in his "Dernier Chant de Childe Harold." For the first time the Eastern tale was now told by a poet who had actually seen Eastern lands and races, their scenery and their cities, who drew his figures and landscape with his eye on the objects, and had not mixed his local colors by the process of skimming books of travel for myths, legends, costume or customs, with such result as may be seen in Moore's "Lalla Rookh" and in Southey's "Thalaba," or even in Scott's "Talisman." The preface to this novel shows that Scott fully appreciated the risk of competing with Byron, albeit in prose, in the field of Asiatic romance, yet all his skill avails little to diminish the sense of conventional figure-drawing and of uncertainty in important details when they are not gathered in the field, but only transplanted from the library.

Byron has noticed in one of his letters the errors of this kind into which a great poet must fall whose accurate observation has been confined mainly to his own country. "There is much

natural talent," he writes, "spilt over the 'Excursion,' yet Wordsworth says of Greece that it is a land of

Rivers, fertile plains, and sounding shores

Under a cope of variegated sky.

The rivers are dry half the year, the plains are barren, the shores still and tideless, the sky is anything but variegated, being for months and months beautifully blue."

This may be thought trivial criticism, yet it is evidence of the attention given by Byron to precise description. His accuracy in Oriental costume was also a novelty at that time, when so little was known of Oriental lore that even Mr. Murray "doubted the propriety of putting the name of Cain into the mouth of a Mahomedan." With regard to his characters, we may readily admit that in the "Glaour" or the "Bride of Abydos" the heroes and heroines behave and speak after the fashion of high-flying Western romance, and that their lofty sentiments in love or death have nothing specifically Oriental about them. But this was merely the romantic style used by all Byron's contemporaries, and generally accepted by the taste of that day as essential to the metrical rendering of a passionate love story. It may be argued, with Scott, that when a writer of fiction takes in hand a distant age or country, he is obliged to translate ideas and their expressions into forms with which his readers are, to some extent, familiar. Byron seasoned his Oriental tales with phrases and imagery borrowed from the East; but whatever scenic or characteristic effects might have thus been produced are seriously marred by the explanatory notes and erudite references to authorities that are appended to the text. This fashion of garnishing with far-fetched outlandish words, in order to

give the requisite flavor of time or place, was peculiar to the new romantic school of his era; it was the poetical dialect of the time, and Byron employed it too copiously. Yet, with all his faults, he remains a splendid colorist, who broke through a limited mannerism in poetry, and led forth his readers into an unexplored region of cloudless sky and purple sea, where the serene aspect of nature could be powerfully contrasted with the shadow of death and desolation cast over it by the violence of man.

Undoubtedly this contrast, between fair scenery and foul barbarism has been presented more than once in poetry, yet no one before Byron had brought it out with the sure hand of an eye-witness, or with such ardent sympathy for a nation which had been for centuries trodden under the feet of aliens in race and religion, yet was still clinging to its ancient traditions of freedom. Throughout his descriptive poems from "Childe Harold" to "Don Juan," it is the true and forcible impression, taken from sight of the thing itself, that gives vigor and animation to his pictures, and that has stamped on the memory the splendid opening of the "Glaour," the meditations in Venice and Rome, the glorious scenery of the Greek islands, and even such single lines as

By the blue rushing of the arrowy Rhone.

In the art of painting what may be called historical landscape, where retrospective associations give intellectual color to the picture, Byron has very few rivals. His descriptions of the Lake of Geneva, of Clarens, of the Trojan plain—

High barrows without marble or a name,  
A vast, untilled, and mountain-skirted plain,  
And Ida in the distance—

have the quality of faithful drawing illumined by imaginative power. They have certainly touched the emotions and enhanced the pleasure of all travellers in the last three generations whose minds are accessible to poetic suggestion; and if at the present day their style be thought too elaborate and the allusions commonplace, it cannot be denied that the fine art of English composition would be poorer without them. The stanzas in "Childe Harold" on Waterloo are full of the energy which takes hold of and poetically elevates the incidents of war—the distant cannon, the startled dancers, the transition from the ball-room to the battlefield, from the gaiety of life to the stillness of death. Nothing very original or profound in all this, it may be said; yet the great difficulty of dealing adequately with heroic action in contemporary verse, of writing a poem on a campaign that has just been reported in the newspapers, is exemplified by the fact that Walter Scott's two compositions on Waterloo are failures; nor has any poet since Byron yet succeeded in giving us a good modern battle-piece.

Nevertheless, there is much in Byron's longer poems (excepting always "Don Juan") that seems tedious to the modern reader; there are descriptions and declamations too long drawn-out to sustain the interest; and there are many lines that are superfluous, untidy and sometimes ungrammatical. One can only plead, in extenuation of these defects, that the fashion of his day was for long metrical romance, in which it is difficult to maintain the high standard of careful composition exacted by the latest criticism. It is almost impossible to tell a long story in verse that shall be throughout poetical, and one main reason why this fashion has nearly passed away may be surmised to be that the versified narrative cannot adapt itself in this

respect to the present taste, which is impatient of fluent lengthy heroics, refusing to accept them for the sake of some finely executed passages. Southey's epics are now quite unreadable, and many of the blemishes in Byron's poetry are inseparable from the romantic style; they are to be found in Scott's metrical tales, which have much redundancy and some weak versification; while his chiefs and warriors often talk a stilted, chivalrous language which would now be discarded as theatrical. Byron's personages have the high tragic accent and costume; yet one must admit that they have also a fierce vitality; and as for the crimes and passions of his Turkish pashas and Greek patriots, he had actually seen the men and heard of their deeds. The fact that he also portrayed more unreal characters in dismal drapery—Lara, Conrad and Manfred, as the mouthpieces of splenetic misanthropy—has led to some unjust depreciation of his capacity for veritable delineation. Macaulay, for example, in his essay on Byron, observes that "Johnson, the man whom Don Juan met in the slave market, is a striking failure. How differently would Sir Walter Scott have drawn a bluff, fearless Englishman in such a situation!" and Mr. Swinburne echoes this criticism. But it is unfair to compare a minor character, slightly sketched into a poem for the purposes of the plot, with the full-length portrait that might have been made of him by a first-class artist in prose. The proper comparison would be between the figures in the metrical romances of the two poets, whereby it might be shown that Scott could take as little trouble as Byron did about an unimportant subsidiary actor. In regard to the leading heroes and heroines, Scott's poetic creations are hardly more interesting or dramatic than Byron's; and whenever he makes, even in prose, an excursion into

Asia, his figure-drawing becomes conventional. But he was usually at the disadvantage, from which Byron was certainly free, of being hampered by an inartistic propensity to make his virtuous heroes triumph in the long run.

Yet it must be admitted that no poet of the same calibre has turned out so much loose uneven work as Byron. His lapses into lines that are lame or dull are the more vexatious to the correct, modern ear when, as sometimes happens, they spoil a fine passage, and in the midst of a superb flight his muse comes down with a broken wing. In the subjoined stanza, for example, from the Waterloo episode in "Childe Harold," the first five lines are clear, strenuous and concise, while the next three are confused and clumsy; so that though he recovers himself in the final line, the general effect is much damaged:—

Last noon beheld them full of lusty  
life,  
Last eve in Beauty's circle proudly  
gay,  
The midnight brought the signal-  
sound of strife,  
The morn the marshalling in arms—  
the day  
Battle's magnificently stern array.  
The thunder-clouds close o'er it *which*  
*when rent,*  
*The earth is covered thick with other*  
*clay,*  
*Which her own clay shall cover,*  
heaped and pent,  
Rider and horse— friend, foe—in one  
red burial blent.

These blots, and there are many, become less pardonable when we observe, from the new edition, that Byron by no means neglected revision of his work. But his impetuous temper, and the circumstance of his writing far from the printing-press, encouraged hasty execution; and though the most true remark that "easy writing is devilish hard reading" is his own, though

he praised excessively the chiselled verse of Pope, he was always inclined to pose as one who threw off jets of boiling inspiration, and in one letter he compares himself to the tiger who makes or misses his point in one spring. He ranked Pope first among English poets, yet he learnt nothing in that school; he pretended to undervalue Shakespeare, yet he must have had the plays by heart, for his letters bristle with quotations from them. His avowed taste in poetry is hard to reconcile with his own performances; his verse was rushing, irregular, audacious, yet he overpraises the smooth composition of Rogers; he dealt in heroic themes and passionate love stories, yet Crabbe's humble pastorals had their full charm for him. Except Crabbe and Rogers, he declared, "we are all—Scott, Wordsworth, Moore, Campbell and I—upon a wrong revolutionary poetical system, not worth a damn in itself;" but among these are some leaders of the great nineteenth-century renaissance in English verse; and Byron was foremost in the revolt against unnatural insipidity which has brought us through romance to realism by his clear apprehension of natural form and color, and even by the havoc which he made among conventional respectabilities. He dwelt too incessantly upon his own sorrows and sufferings; and in the gloomy soliloquies of his dramatic characters we have an actor constantly reappearing in his favorite part. Yet this also was a novelty to the generation brought up on the impersonal poetry of the classic school; and here, again, he is a forerunner of the self-reflecting analytical style that is common in our own day; for there is a Byronic echo in the "divine despair" of Tennyson. The melancholy brooding spirit, dissatisfied with society and detesting complacency, had for some time been in the air; it had affected the literature of France



and Germany; Werther, Obermann and René are all moulded on the same type with Childe Harold; yet Sainte-Beuve rightly says that this identity of type does not mean imitation—it means that the writers were all in the same atmosphere. There is everywhere the same reaction against philosophic optimism and the same antipathy to the ways of mankind “so vain and melancholy.” They sought refuge from in-born ennui or irritability among the mountains, on the sea, or in distant voyages, and they instinctively embodied these moods and feelings in various personages of fiction, in the solitary wanderer, in the fierce outlaw, in the man “with chilling mystery of mien,” who rails against heaven and humanity. Their literature, in short, however overcolored it may have been, did represent a generally prevailing characteristic among men of excessive sensibility at a time of stir and tumult in the world around them; it was not a mere unnatural invention, though we must leave to the psychologist the task of tracing a connection between this mental attitude and the circumstances that generated it. But the self-occupied mind has no dramatic power, and so their repertory contained one single character, a reproduction of their own in different attitudes and situations. Chateaubriand may be said never to have dropped his mask; whereas Byron, whose English sense of humor must have fought against taking himself so very seriously, relieved his conscience by lapses into epigram, irony and persiflage. Thus, in the same year (1818), and from the same place (Venice), he produced the fourth canto of “Childe Harold,” full of deep longing for unbroken solitude:—

There is a pleasure in the pathless  
woods,  
There is a rapture on the lonely  
shore,

There is society, where none intrudes,  
By the deep sea, and Music in its  
roar;

and also “Beppo,” a satirical sketch of the loose and easy Venetian society in which he was actually living. Here, again, his somewhat ribald letters from Venice do his romantic poetry some wrong; but in fact he had a diabolic pleasure in betraying himself, and his “Mémoires d’Outre Tombe,” if they had been preserved, would have been very different from Chateaubriand’s elaborate autobiography.

It was the spectacle of Christians groaning under Turkish oppression, and of their heroic resistance, that inspired three of Byron’s finest poems, the “Glaour,” the “Bride of Abydos,” the “Siege of Corinth.” On this subject he was so heartily in earnest that he could even lose sight of his own woes; and notwithstanding the exuberance of color and sentiment, these tales still hold their place in the first rank of metrical romance. Their construction is imperfect, even fragmentary; yet while Scott could put together and tell his story much better, not even Scott could drive it onward and sustain the verse at a high level with greater energy, or decorate his narrative with finer descriptions of scenery, or give more intensity to the moments of fierce action. The splendid apostrophe to Greece in the “Glaour”—

Climb of the unforgotten brave!  
Whose land from plain to mountain  
cave  
Was Freedom’s home or Glory’s grave,

has forty lines of unsurpassed beauty and fire, written in the manuscript, as a note tells us, in a hurried and almost illegible hand—an authentic example of true improvisation which the elaborate poets of our own day may match if they can. The tumid phrase and melodramatic figuring—

Dark and unearthly is the scowl  
That glares beneath his dusky cowl

are now worn-out theatrical properties; yet those who have seen the untamed Asiatic might find it hard to overdraw the murderous hate and sullen ferocity that his face, or his victim's, will occasionally disclose. The heroes, at any rate, love and die in a masculine way; it is the old tragic theme of bitter, unmerited misfortune, of daring adventure that ends fatally, without any of the wailing sensuality that infects the more harmonious poetry of a later day. There are, perhaps, for modern taste, too many outlandish words and references to Eastern customs or beliefs, requiring glossaries and marginal explanations; nor does the profuse annotation of the present edition lighten a reader's burden in this respect. Byron had no business to write "By pale Phingari's trembling light," leaving us at the mercy of assiduous editors to expound that "Phingari" is the Greek *φειγγάριον*, and stands here for the moon. And if he could have spared us such Orientalisms as "Al Sirât's arch," or "avenging Monkir's scythe," we should have mixed up less desultory reading with the enjoyment of fine passages. He gives us too much of his local coloring, he checks the rush of his verse by superfluous metaphors, he has weak and halting lines. The style is heated and fuming, yet the dainty art-critic who lays hands on such metal thrown red hot from the forge may chance to burn his fingers over it. Nor must we forget that in these poems Byron brought the classic lands of Greece and the Levant within the sphere of modern romance and has unquestionably added some "deathless pages" to English literature.

Byron has told us why he adopted for the "Corsair," and afterwards for "Lara," "the good old and now neglected heroic couplet:"—

The stanza of Spenser is, perhaps, too slow and dignified for narrative, though I confess it is the measure after my own heart; Scott alone, of the present generation, has hitherto triumphed completely over the fatal facility of the octosyllabic verse; and this is not the least victory of his fertile and mighty genius; in blank verse Milton, Thomson, and our dramatists are the beacons that shine along the deep, but warn us from the rough and barren rocks on which they are kindled.<sup>1</sup>

We doubt much, from a comparison of the poems, whether the experiment of changing his metre was successful. The short eight-syllabled line displayed Byron's capacity for vigorous conclusion and swift movement; it is eminently suited for strength and speed; whereas in the slow processional couplet he becomes diffuse, often tedious; he has room for more rhetoric and verbosity; he falls more into the error of describing at length the character and sentiments of his gloomy heroes, instead of letting them act and speak for themselves. At moments when inspiration is running low, and a gap has to be filled up, the shorter line needs less padding, and can be more rapidly run over when it is weak. Whereas a feeble heroic couplet becomes ponderous and sinks more quickly into bathos—as in the following sample from the "Corsair:"—

Oh! burst the Haram, wrong not on  
your lives  
One female form—remember—we have  
wives.

And the consequence has been that "Lara" and the "Corsair" are now, we believe, the least readable of Byron's metrical romances.

Of Byron's dramas we are obliged to say that, to borrow his own metaphor, he would have fared better as a poet if he had taken warning from the bea-

<sup>1</sup> Preface to the "Corsair."

cons, and had given blank verse a wide berth, instead of setting himself boldly on a course which, as he evidently knew, is full of peril for fast-sailing, free-going versifiers. He saw that he could not approach the great masters of this measure, he was resolved not to imitate them, and so he appears to have chosen the singular alternative of writing nothing that should in the least resemble them. His general object as a playwright is stated, in a letter about "Sardanapalus," to have been "to dramatize striking passages of history and mythology."

"You will find," he adds most truly, "all this very unlike Shakespeare; and so much the better in one sense, for I look upon him to be the worst of models, though the most extraordinary of writers. It has been my object to be as simple and severe as Alfieri, and I have broken down the poetry as nearly as I could to common language."

And undoubtedly he did break it down so effectually that much of his blank verse hobbles like a lame horse, being often mere prose printed in short lines. Here are two specimens, not cut into lengths, which have no metrical construction at all:—

Unless you keep company with him,  
and you seem scarce used to such high  
society, you can't tell how he ap-  
proaches.<sup>2</sup>

Where thou shalt pass thy days in  
peace, but on condition that the  
three young princes are given up as  
hostages.<sup>3</sup>

Many others of the same quality might be given in which the *dissecti membra poetæ* would be exceedingly hard to find. It is surprising that a writer of Byron's experience should have fallen into the error of supposing that simplicity could be attained by the mere use of common language. For even

Wordsworth, who is a master of simple strength, could never allow his peasants to talk their ordinary vernacular without a fatal drop into the commonplace; and all verse that is to be plain and unaffected in style and thought requires the most studious composition. Byron seems scarcely to have understood that blank verse has any rules of scansion, and his signal failure in this metre has become less tolerable and more conspicuous, since Keats in his day and Tennyson after him, have carefully studied the construction of blank verse, and have left us admirable examples of its capacity for romantic expression. It is indeed strange that Byron should have fancied that he could use so delicate an instrument with a rough unpractised hand.

There are some vigorous passages scattered through the plays, and we have it on record that Dr Parr could not sleep a wink after reading "Sardanapalus." Nevertheless we fear that the present generation will find little cause for demurring to Jeffrey's judgment upon the tragedies, that they are for the most part "solemn, prolix and ostentatious." They were not composed, as Byron himself explained, "with the most remote view to the stage," so that he had not before his eyes the wholesome fear of a critical audience. In truth it must be admitted that he lacked the true dramatic instinct; he could only set up his leading figures to deliver imposing speeches appropriate to a tragic situation; and one may guess that the consciousness of awkward handling weighed upon the spirit and style of his blank verse, for his ear seems to have completely misled him when it had lost the guidance of recurrent rhyme. Of "Cain: a Mystery," one must speak reverently, since Walter Scott, to whom it was dedicated, wrote that the author had "matched Milton on his own ground;" yet in Lu-

<sup>2</sup> The Deformed Transformed (part I, scene I.).

<sup>3</sup> Sardanapalus (act v, scene I.).

cifer, who leads the dialogue, we have little more than a spectral embodiment of Byron's own rebellious temper; and in this poem, as in "Manfred," the discussion of metaphysical problems carries him beyond his depth. There are, nevertheless, some fine declamatory passages; and we may quote as a curiosity one soft line fresh from the Swiss mountains:—

Pipes in the liberal air  
Mixed with the sweet bells of the sauntering herd,

which is to be found in "Manfred" and might have been taken from the "Excursion."

When we turn from the plays to the lyrics, we see at once the importance, to a poet, of choosing rightly the metrical form that is the best expression of his peculiar genius. In some of these shorter poems Byron rises to his highest level and by these will his popularity be permanently maintained. They are certainly of very unequal merit; yet when Byron is condemned for artificiality and glaring color, we may point to the poem beginning "And thou art dead, so young and fair," where form and feeling are in harmony throughout eight long stanzas, without a single line that is feeble or overcharged:—

The better days of life were ours;  
The worst can be but mine:  
The sun that cheers, the storm that  
lowers,  
Shall never more be thine.  
The silence of that dreamless sleep  
I envy now too much to weep;  
Nor need I to repine  
That all those charms have passed  
away,  
I might have watched through long  
decay.

There is no novelty in the ideas, nor does he open the deeper vein of thoughts that touch the mind with a sense of mortality. Yet the verse has

a masculine brevity that renders effectively the attitude in which men may well be content firmly to confront an irreparable misfortune.

In his poems of strenuous action, although Byron has not the rare quality of heroic simplicity, he could at times strike a high vibrating war note, and could interpret romantically the patriotic spirit. The two stanzas which we quote from the Hebrew Melodies show that he could now and then shake off the redundant metaphors and epithets that overload too much of his impetuous verse, and use his strength freely:—

Though thou art fallen, while we are  
free  
Thou shalt not taste of death!  
The generous blood that flowed from  
thee  
Disdains to sink beneath;  
Within our veins its currents be,  
Thy spirit on our breath.

Thy name, our charging hosts along,  
Shall be their battle word;  
Thy fall, the theme of choral song  
By virgin voices poured—  
To weep would do thy glory wrong;  
Thou shalt not be deplored.

And we have another magnificent example of Byron's lyrical power in the "Isles of Greece," where the two lines,

Ah, no! the voices of the dead  
Sound like a distant torrent's fall,

drop suddenly into the elegiac strain, into a mournful echo that dwells upon the ear, followed by the rising note of a call to arms. Mr. Swinburne has described this poem as "composed of strong oratorical effects arranged in vigorous and telling succession;"\* upon which it is enough to observe that contemporary efforts at writing war songs have for the most part signally failed, while the "Isles of Greece" will long continue to stir the masculine imagination of Englishmen.

\*Miscellaneous Wordsworth and Byron.

On the other hand, it must be admitted that Byron's Occasional Pieces abound with cheap pathos, dubious fervor, and a kind of commonplace sentimentality that comes out in the form as well as in the feeling of his inferior work. The rhymes are apt to be hackneyed, the similes are sometimes tagged on awkwardly instead of being weaved into the texture, the expression has often lost its strength, and the emotion lacks sincerity. Byron, like his brother poets, wrote copiously what was published indiscriminately; but if the first-class work had not been very good it would never have buoyed up above sheer oblivion so much that was third-rate and bad. His pieces are much *too* occasional, for he was prone to indulgence in hasty verse whenever the fit was upon him, or as a method of enlisting public sympathy with his own misconduct so that he was constantly appearing before the world as a perfidious sentimentalist, with a false air of lamentation over the misfortunes which he had brought upon himself, as in the Poems of the Separation. Yet when he shook off his personal grief and took to politics, no other poet could more vividly express his intense living interest in the great events of his time, or strike the proper note of some great catastrophe. It may be affirmed that the "Ode to Napoleon" is better than anything else that has been written in English upon the most astonishing career in modern history:—

The triumph and the vanity.

The rapture of the strife,  
The earthquake voice of Victory  
To thee the breath of life.  
The sword, the sceptre, and that sway  
Which man seemed made but to obey.  
Wherewith renown was rife—  
All quelled; Dark Spirit, what must be  
The madness of thy memory!

The Desolater desolate,  
The Victor overthrown;  
The Arbiter of others' fate  
A suppliant for his own!

Is it some yet imperial hope  
That with such change can calmly  
cope?

Or dread of death alone?  
To die a prince or live a slave,  
Thy choice is most ignobly brave.

In the first of these two stanzas the seventh line is weak and breaks the rapid rush of the verse; but the high pressure and impetus of the poem are sustained throughout twenty stanzas, producing the effect of an improvisatore who stops rather from want of breath than from any other lack of inspiration. In this respect the ode is a rare poetical exploit; for all poems composed under the spur of the moment, upon some memorable incident that has just startled the world, must be more or less improvised, and must hit the right pitch of extraordinary popular emotion. It is the difficulty of turning out good work under such arduous conditions that has too often shipwrecked or stranded some unlucky laureate.

There is one province of verse, if not exactly of poetry, in which Byron reigns undisputedly, though it is far distant from the land of lyrics. In his latest and longest production, "Don Juan," he tells us that his "sere fancy has fallen into the yellow leaf:—"

And the sad truth which hovers o'er  
my desk  
Turns what was once romantic to  
burlesque.

It was in "Beppo: a Venetian Story" that he dropped, for the first time, the weapon of trenchant sarcasm and invective, with no very fine edge upon it, which he flourished in his youth, and took up the tone of light humorous satire upon society. He soon acquired mastery over the metre (which was suggested, as is well known, by Hookham Frere's "Whistlecraft"); and in "Don Juan" he produced a long, ram-



bling poem of a kind never before attempted, and still far beyond any subsequent imitations, in the English language. Of a certainty there is much that is by no means desirable to imitate, for the English literature does not assimilate the element of cynical libertinism, which indeed becomes coarse on an English tongue. Yet it is remarkable that the Whistlecraft metre, although Byron could manage it with point and spirit, has never produced more than insipid *pastiche* in later hands. But while "Beppo" may be classed as pure burlesque, "Don Juan" strikes various keys, ironical and voluptuous, grave and gay, rising sometimes to the level of strenuous realistic narrative in the episode of the shipwreck and siege, falling often into something like grotesque buffoonery, with much picturesque description, many animated lines, and occasional touches of effective pathos. As a story it has the picaresque flavor of "Gil Blas," presenting a variety of scenes and adventures strung together without any definite plot; as a poem its reputation rests upon some passages of indisputable beauty; while Byron's own experiences, grievances, and animosities, personal or political, run through the whole performance like an accompaniment, and break out occasionally into humorous sarcasm or violent denunciation. That the overheated fervor of a stormy youth should cool down into disdainful irony, under the chill of disappointment and exhaustion, was natural enough; and this unfinished poem may be regarded as typical of Byron's erratic life, full of loose intrigue and adventure, with its sudden and premature ending.

It is in "Don Juan" that Byron stands forth as the founder and precursor of modern realism in poetry. He has now finally exorcised the hyperbolic fiend that vexed his youth, he has cast off the illusions of romance, he

knows the ground he treads upon, and his pictures are drawn from life; he is the foremost of those who have ventured boldly upon the sombre actualities of war and bloodshed:—

But let me put an end unto my theme,  
There was an end of Ismail, hapless town,  
Far flashed her burning towers o'er Danube's stream,  
And redly ran his blushing waters down.  
The horrid warwhoop and the shriller scream  
Rose still; but fainter were the thunders grown;  
Of forty thousand that had manned the wall  
Some hundreds breathed, the rest were silent all.

"A versified paraphrase," it may be said, "of sober history," yet withal very different from the most animated prose, which must be kept at a lower temperature of intense expression. If we turn to quieter scenes—which are called picturesque because the artist, like the painter, has selected the right subject and point of view, and has grouped his details with exquisite skill—we may take the stanzas describing the return of the pirate Lambro to his Greek island—

He saw his white walls shining in the sun,  
His garden trees all shadowy and green—

as a fine example of pure objective writing, which lays out the whole scene truthfully, with the direct vision of one who has seen it. One does not find here the suggestive intimations, the wide imaginative horizon of higher poetry; there are no musical blendings of sound and sense, as in such lines as Tennyson's

By the long wash of Australasian seas.

Yet in these passages Byron has after

his own fashion served Nature faithfully and he has preserved to us some masterly sketches of life and manners that have long since disappeared. The Greek islands have since fallen under the dominion of European uniformity; the costume of the people, the form of their government, are shabby imitations of Western models. But the cloudless sky, the sun slowly sinking behind Morea's hills, the sea on whose azure brow Time writes no wrinkle, and the marbled steep of Sunium, are still unchanged; and the peaceful tourist in these waters will see at once that Byron was a true workman in line and color, and will feel the intellectual pleasure that comes from accurate yet artistic interpretation of natural beauties.

The poem of "Don Juan" is, therefore, a miscellany, connected on the picturesque side with "Childe Harold," and by its mocking spirit with "Beppo" and the "Vision of Judgment," the two pieces that may be classed as pure burlesque. The irreverent persiflage of the "Vision" belongs to the now obsolete school of Voltaire, and in biting wit and daring ridicule the performance is not unworthy of that supreme master in *diablerie*. Nor can it be asserted that this lashing sarcasm was undeserved, or that all the profanity was in Byron's parody, for Southey's conception of the Almighty as a High Tory judge, with an obsequious jury of angels, holding a trial of George III, browbeating the witnesses against him and acquitting him with acclamation, so that he leaves the court without a stain on his character, was false and abject enough to stir the bile of a less irritable Liberal than Byron. There exists, moreover, in the mind of every good English Whig a lurking sympathy with the Miltonic Satan, inasmuch that all subsequent attempts by minor poets to humiliate and misrepresent him have invariably

failed. Southey's Vision, and Robert Montgomery's libel upon Satan, have each undergone the same fate of being utterly extinguished, knocked clean out of English literature by one single crushing onslaught, of Byron and Macaulay respectively.

Our conclusion must be brief, for in fact it is not easy to propound to the readers of this Review any general observations, which shall be new as well as true, upon a man's life and works that have been subjected to incessant scrutiny and criticism throughout the nineteenth century. At the beginning of this period Byron found himself matched, in the poetic arena, against contemporary rivals of first-class genius and striking originality. And from his death almost up to the century's close there has been no time when some considerable poet has not occupied the forefront of English letters, and stamped his impression on the public mind. Variety in style and ideas has produced many vicissitudes of taste in poetry; it has been discovered that narrative can be better done in prose, and so the novel has largely superseded story-telling in verse. There have also been great political and social changes, and all these things have severely tested the staying powers of a writer who is too closely associated with his own period to be reckoned among those wide-ranging spirits whom Shelley has called "the kings of thought." Nevertheless the new edition of Byron is appearing at a moment which is, we think, not inopportune. There is just now, as by a coincidence there was in the year 1800, a dearth of poetic production; we have fallen among lean years; we have come to a break in the succession of notable poets; the Victorian celebrities have one by one passed away; and we can only hope that the first quarter of the twentieth century may bring again some such bountiful harvest as was

vouchsafed to our grandfathers at the beginning of the nineteenth. In the meantime the reading of Byron may operate as a wholesome tonic upon the literary nerves of the rising generation; for as Mr. Swinburne has generously acknowledged, with the emphatic concurrence of Matthew Arnold, his poems have "the excellence of sincerity and strength." Now one tendency of latter-day verse has been toward that over-delicacy of fibre which has been termed decadence, toward the preference of correct metrical harmonies over distinct and incisive expression, toward vague indications of meaning. In this form the melody prevails over the matter; the style inclines to become precious and garnished with verbal artifice. Some recent French poets, indeed, in their anxiety to correct the troublesome lucidity of their mother-tongue, have set up the school of symbolism, which deals in half-veiled metaphor and sufficiently obscure allusion, relying upon subtly suggestive phrases for evoking associations. For ephemeral infirmities of this kind the straightforward virility of Byron's best work may serve as an antidote. On the other hand, we have the well-knit strenuous verse of extreme realism, wrought out by a poet in his shirt sleeves, with rhymes clear-sounding like the tap of hammer on anvil, who sings of rough folk by sea and land, and can touch national emotion in regard to the incidents or politics of the moment. He paints without varnish, in hard outline, avoiding metaphor and ornamental diction generally; taking his language so freely out of the mouths of men in actual life that he makes occasional slips into vulgarity. He is at the opposite pole from the

symbolist: but true poetry demands much more distinction of style and nobility of thought. And here again Byron's high lyrical notes may help to maintain elevation of tone and to preserve the romantic tradition. His poetry, like his character, is full of glaring imperfections; yet he wrote as one of the great world in which he made for a time such a noise; and after all that has been said about his moral delinquencies, it is certain that we could have better spared a better man.

In one of Tennyson's earlier letters is the following passage with reference to something written at the time in "Philip van Artevelde:"

He does not sufficiently take into consideration the peculiar strength evolved by such writers as Byron and Shelley, who, however mistaken they may be, did yet give the world another heart, and a new pulse, and so we are kept going. Blessed be those who grease the wheels of the old world.

This is the large-hearted, far-seeing judgment of one who could survey the whole line and evolutionary succession of English verse, being himself destined to close the long list of nineteenth-century poets, which was opened by Byron and his contemporaries. The time has surely now come when we may leave off discussing Byron as a social outlaw, and cease groping after more evidence of his misdeeds. The office of true criticism is to show that he made so powerful an impression on our literature as to win for himself permanent rank in its annals, and that his work, with all its shortcomings does yet mark and illustrate an important stage in the connected development of our English poetry.

## A VISIT TO THE BOER PRISONERS AT ST. HELENA.

There is a natural interest felt in England with regard to the Boer prisoners now at the end of a hard-fought war. It may, therefore, be worth while to put down a very few of my experiences in a month's visit to St. Helena. But in the first place I must guard against possible misconception. I know there are two sides to the war: I know that there have been English prisoners too, and sorrow and hardship in English homes, many long separations and many final ones. It must not be supposed that I forget these things, even if I speak of Deadwood Camp. My purpose just now is simply to tell a few incidents which I saw for myself, and of which I speak only because they came within my personal knowledge.

I was, of course, warned by my wiser friends against the Quixotic idea of going to St. Helena to visit the Boer prisoners. In the midst of an exasperated war what kind of welcome would they give to a stranger from the enemy's country? How could I rid my coming of an air of officious interference, or what reasonable apology could I bring for intruding where my presence might be resented and my purpose repudiated? A rude and rough people, they might be expected, I was told, to meet a woman with insulting words, even if veiled in the obscurity of a foreign tongue, and I was warned against entering the camp alone.

However, I was anxious to form for myself a clearer impression of the Boers than I could gain from the public press. By the courtesy of the Secretary of State for War I was given permission to visit the camp at St. Helena. I landed on the 16th of September; the officers in command of the troops and the camp, Colonel Leeke and Col-

onel Evans, interpreted Lord Lansdowne's permission with a chivalrous generosity, and allowed me a freedom of intercourse with the prisoners for which I owe them my warmest thanks; and added to all other benefits a ready hospitality. My visit might have been a very different one but for their kindness.

But the difficulties of St. Helena are great enough even when man does not step in to aggravate them. I had heard much of the island—that is of its romantic and picturesque side. What a dark and gloomy emotion fell on me as I saw that colossal slag-heap! For make a slag-heap a thousand times bigger, you do but magnify a thousand times its dreariness and grime. It is true that the hills on either side of Jamestown, the seaport and capital, show the island in its worst colors. Narrow clefts have been cut by streams falling from heights, and on either side of these valleys walls of burnt-out rock rise for two thousand feet or so—dingy brown, a gaunt waste of formless protuberances and gaping holes. All seems as it were crumbling to hopeless ruin. You scarcely dare to walk under those threatening walls; if the cannon of the fort that crowns the heights were fired you feel that the mountain must surely totter on its loose foundations and fall again to chaos.

Once on a time merciful forests covered the less precipitous slopes, but the cutting down of these long ago has left all bare to wind and rain, till the covering soil has been washed from the waste of grit and stone. Even under the ceaseless mists of the rainy season no plants find shelter amid those dead and barren cinders, save where the desolation is made more dreary by shabby reaches of horrible gray cactus,

1900

here and there enlivened, if it can be called enlivened, with the green of spiked aloe leaves, crude and repelling. Occasionally at evening the clouds would gather in dark blue masses and cling round the hill-sides, suggesting a hidden beauty behind them. But the clouds would lift again.

I was shown, indeed, better things than this—valleys and hills where a scanty grass covered the slopes, beds of arum lilies flowering along the watercourses, and the beautiful plantations round Government House. I saw the great cliffs rising from the sea, the astonishing circuit of the old shattered crater of an extinct volcano, the striking views where the fundamental rock, stripped of its more friable covering, stands out in strange weird forms, and where cascades fall hundreds of feet over the black precipices. Unfortunately I was unable to get to the most beautiful region, to the highest peaks where the old vegetation still flourishes and great ferns and the cabbage-tree (which in the lower grounds is sad enough to look on) shelter the indigenous society of the island, the wire-bird and the ancient snails. I was unfortunate. The weather was misty and gloomy. There was no bright sun. The sea was gray. And my journey to Deadwood Camp took me up hill-sides that deepened from day to day the melancholy of my first impression. Nothing there but stones and patches of cactus, withered, yellow and old. In some more sheltered spots a few trees still struggle desperately against annihilation; trees snapped off short by the wind, while some lower branch, bending round and about to find shelter, apes the part of the main trunk; trees bent double till the topmost bough enters the earth and forms a dry, barren arch; trees that literally crawl along the ground for safety. In the rare spots where there is half an acre or so level ground, a shanty rises

with a roof of corrugated iron, a little verandah, perhaps, and a patch of bananas—all lying under the same ceaseless wind, all in the same stage of obscure and shabby forlornness. What a sordid Nature, tattered and battered, ignoble, dingy, vulgar and unashamed! Everthing is foreign, dejected, incongruous. The Kaffir thorn, the African palm, the Indian banyan, the Scotch fir, the Port Jackson willow, are not at home, but transported as it were to a friendless inn. The beautiful cardinal bird, whose scarlet plumage flames among the cactus and the tormented thorn, looks incredibly homeless and strayed, like a parouet escaped in the London streets. You already see its natural doom—to be snared and sold to the man-of-war lying in the harbor.

And the very people—what are they? Descendants of the Chinese, French settlers before the Revolution, West Africans, Malays, Welshmen, men of Lancashire, varied cargoes of negroes landed from slave ships: and to these add sailors of an English man-of-war, a West Indian regiment, a body of artillery, the Gloucestershire Militia, a company of Cape Boys as mule-drivers and Boer prisoners of war. Portuguese coins are dug up, and plaques of Dutch delft with Bible stories on them. Relics of Napoleon are multiplied. Over that melancholy cinder fortress seems still to hang the shadow of its first human inhabitant, flung there with every limb and feature mutilated, and a few slaves to fulfil for him the functions for which he had no longer hands or feet.

My first visit to Deadwood Camp made me reflect on the wisdom of my friends. Five miles of hill and broken roads took two hours in going and as much in coming again, for neither up nor down those steepes could the horse get beyond a walk. The guide led me through the tents of the English soldiers, with the butchery and bakery,



the wood-piles and store-heaps, to the Boer camp beyond, enclosed by a circle of sentry-boxes and a double ring of barbed wire. On through the rows of tents we went to the tin village which the Boers (finding twelve men in a tent somewhat crowded) have built for themselves of aloe sticks and biscuit tins, with their dark blankets over all to keep out the heat and cold. Irregular streets of these tin cabins lie one behind the other, some small enough for a man to creep into and sleep, others higher and holding three or four; a miniature restaurant, a ginger-beer palace, a windmill where an ingenious vane of tin and sticks turns a rude lathe for the wood-carver inside; and tiny workshops where men are carving with pen-knives wood from camp packing-cases, meat-bones, cow-horns or sticks, and show with just pride models of cannons and Cape wagons, carved boxes and bone ornaments. A French mining engineer has engraved a die with an old sharpened file and a block of steel, and struck copper medals. Illuminators and artists in black and white have patiently defied the great difficulties of their position.

In the streets other artists are at work over stoves they have made of oil-tins pierced with holes, where, through the fumes of wood fires, beef may be seen stewing and flat cakes of flour and water tossed out. The towering crowd of men (I began to wonder if the peasant warriors among them did not count 6 feet 3 inches for their average height) drifted after me or looked on at a distance, with a superficial curiosity mitigated by indifference. The numbers of that crowd, the foreign speech, the foreign look, filled me with a genuine dismay. I scarcely knew how to introduce myself, and through an interpreter, who saw in me a highly unnecessary intruder and in the crowd a race of rebels and criminals, to tell

them why I had come. I thought again my friends were wise.

As I look back I am filled with wonder at the rapid way in which all difficulties disappeared before the courtesy and consideration of the Boers themselves. They received me with the utmost politeness and good breeding, and in all my intercourse with the farmers, I found the simple and dignified courtesy of a self-respecting people.

I am aware that there is as great a variety of characters among the Boers as among any other people. "The camp is like a town," one said to me, "with every profession represented in it, even down to the thief's trade." There is a rough element recruited, I was told, from Johannesburg. But the foreign prisoners were generally contemptuous of the Boer's want of vivacity in making trouble, and claimed for themselves most of the breaches of discipline. "If it had been a camp of Europeans!" they exclaimed. "Perhaps the Boers are quiet; perhaps they are thinking of their families; perhaps it is superstition." "I have seen some things I did not like," an excellent German said, "but how I could have lived under these conditions for a year among 2,000 Europeans I dare not imagine. On the whole there is little to complain of here." It is very evident that to strong men, used to walk ten or twenty miles a day, confinement to the camp is a severe trial; the deep inward brooding which I saw it produce in certain temperaments is less obvious to a casual onlooker than fits of excitement or revolt, but it is not less serious in its final results.

Even if we allow for all the drawbacks of seeing men only under the artificial conditions of camp life, St. Helena is not a bad place for learning something of the Boers. About 2,500 men are now collected there of every profession in the Transvaal. I have

spoken with war officers and commissariat officers, with magistrates, members of the Raad, and officials of various degrees in Pretoria; with men employed in different capacities in Johannesburg mines, and the wandering Jack-of-all-trades of the towns; with land surveyors of the north and west, and men in good mercantile business; with farmers of all sorts, rich and poor, incomers and native-born, progressive and conservative, with men well educated and men of no learning. I knew the Hospital well. I have sat in many a tent and have been welcomed to a share of their rations. Besides all this I have talked with foreigners of many kinds, both those who have been long in the country and others who came out from Europe to join the war, and, after a brief experience of fighting, have now lived with the prisoners in close association for many months. I have heard what Germans and French, Italians, Danes and Swedes have to say, as well as men born in America, Australia or the Cape Colony.

The foreigners were men whose words deserve attention. Not one of them, it must be remembered, was a mercenary. Not one had been a paid soldier. A few had gone out to see war or for the love of adventure, but they all believed just as their countrymen in Europe believed, that they were fighting on the side of freedom and justice. Detached as they were, their criticism was absolutely free and frank. They saw faults and blunders, but their main opinion never changed. They might quarrel with the conduct of the war, not with its purpose. The one who had, perhaps, the least personal sympathy with the Boer temperament, and who had suffered a year's imprisonment for what he considered their humiliating failure to carry out a simple enterprise where any trained troops under a skilled officer must have tri-

umphed, told me that, in spite of all, he would willingly go back to fight for a people with so superb a passion for freedom and so devoted a love of country.

Other foreigners had lived long in the Transvaal, and had generally become burghers. It was strange, outside the circuit of barbed wire, to hear these men all lightly classed together as mercenaries bribed by Transvaal pay, or described as the scum of European peoples tempted by the love of loot. Their profit has been scanty indeed. They hold none of the delusions current elsewhere as to the influence of foreigners among the Boers. If we may judge of sincerity by the sacrifices men will make, they had given proof enough. All had risked in the cause of the Boers their whole possessions and their life. One had a son of fourteen prisoner in the camp, and a boy of thirteen still at the front. "My business is ruined," another said to me, "I have lost everything. I am a prisoner. But till now I do not regret that I was on the side of the Boers. I was fighting against injustice. Even to-day, when I see the fight is hopeless, I still feel I could not do other than what I have done."

Racial partialities must always be taken into account in measuring the value of foreign opinion of the Boer. The French and Italians, for example, do not speak his language, and cannot get very near him. He is, indeed a sore cross to them. They do not like him and cannot help respecting him. He has not fire and dash enough for them, and they hate his form of religion. But that is the worst of their tale; that under feeble leaders he shrinks from attack and that he has no passion for romantic adventure; that he gives his gaolers no trouble to speak of; that his camp is made hideous morning and evening when every tent group starts its own favorite psalms all at

the same time, and the air rings with the discord; that he believes every word in the Bible; and that he complains occasionally that his defeat was a punishment for the unbelief of his Latin allies. But this said, they have no more harm to tell. "Their greatest fault," said one, "and yet perhaps it is not a fault, is that the Boer comes first with them, and every one else a long way after."

On the other hand, the Germans seem to understand the Boer very well, having known the same type of peasantry at home; reticent, wary, diplomatic, made distrustful by his ignorance of business methods. They do not need to go about for so many explanations of him as the Englishman, but read the story far more simply for themselves. They reserve their own educated scepticisms. They object to psalm-singing that begins at 3 A.M. But they understand the Boer warfare better; the long pertinacity of his valor pleases them more than the more showy French "fire of straw, which has to be used on the moment;" they admire his refusal to waste life with so desperate a task before him, his steadiness in reserving his fire, and his marvellous contempt of suffering. I spoke to a German of some tale of suffering. "Ah, that does not matter," he said, "they can bear hardship; but kindness is the thing they need. For they are a kind people." On one point they were all agreed: "You can lead the Boer by friendship. You can never drive him." The Germans realize, too, his quite extraordinary qualities as a pioneer in settling waste lands, and the use which might be made of this by sagacious governors.

The Boer had also, in the Scandinavians, Danes and Swedes, most loyal and understanding friends. But not more so, perhaps, than settlers of English blood gone to the Transvaal from America, the Cape Colony and else-

where. These were well-educated, upright, independent men, who could see with English eyes—as free men, and as honest as any here in England—honorable pioneers, too, of a solid friendship and union between the two peoples, whose work ought to be better understood and appreciated by those who would extend the true influence of England. Their opinion of the life they have known in the Transvaal, if by any chance it could be made known here, deserves from Englishmen the gravest consideration and respect.

I was of course fully warned that Boers brought up to be *slim*, and thinking only how to overreach their neighbor, would try in some way to out-de me, or at least deceive me with false impressions and garbled stories. In fact no such difficulty met me. They do not, as one of them said, "want to hang their opinions on their noses," but if you care to know their views they will tell you with truth and frankness. Not for many a day, in fact, have I heard in England so much freedom of speech and real liberty of discussion. Men would gather in a hospital ward or tent, and take their turn in talk with perfect independence. They would freely express opposite views, and discuss them with vivacity and good humor. In this supreme crisis every man is held free to think and act for himself. One day a party of ten farmers, all born Transvaalers and all new acquaintances of mine, came to see me. We sat in a circle in the garden, and discussed every sort of subject for two hours. Two knew English well, one knew none at all; the rest spoke a little, but not enough to understand me easily or answer comfortably. If, therefore, I asked a question my neighbor interpreted, and the party discussed it in very brief, businesslike sentences; my neighbor then summed up for me the result, while they all leaned for-

ward and listened if his version was exact. Twice he hesitated at some answer given, and explained to me that what was said was "too strong." But the general voice overruled him. "Mrs. Green wants to know the truth. What is the use of telling her anything but the truth?" If any one differed from the rest he said so, and his heresy was then discussed; and on the most important question raised, when it was found that more than one differed, they themselves put the question to each man who had to give his opinion separately (one laggard amid a burst of good-humored laughter), and then the leading one turned to me and said simply, "We have the majority." It was seven to three. In little parliaments such as this without recrimination or nicknames for those who might think differently, I was allowed to hear all opinions and judge for myself. Nor were the groups selected, save in the hospital wards by the accidents of disease, and in the camp by the humor of the passer-by.

I became convinced, too, that in the stories of the war and their personal experiences the men I met wished to give me the simple truth. No second-hand stories were brought to me or tales of common rumor. Not a man who did not refuse to speak of anything but what he himself had seen, and the accounts they gave were not elaborated, but simple and detailed. One whose story had got into a French newspaper with the colors heightened and some rumors adulterating the facts, came to ask me to take it down exactly, and give his sufferings in their unexaggerated form. In the case of the most terrible story I heard, a group of intelligent and very respectable neighbors of the man gathered and each one spoke, not to facts which they had not seen, but to the character they knew in him, of a specially honest and truthful man, whose word had always

weight in all his district. I found no blowing about of rumors to darken the character of their enemies, and any act of kindness was remembered with genuine gratitude; the name of any officer who did a deed of courtesy or consideration is not forgotten.

I asked about this question of duplicity and deceit from the land surveyors who for years have lived among them, and the merchants who had long traded over the country. Their experience, they told me, did not justify these charges—was indeed directly contrary to them. They understood the Boer's fear of being cheated through his ignorance of arithmetic, and his quaint methods of protecting himself. All agreed, however, that in the last few years the evil influence of the foreign element in the goldfields had made itself felt, and that the young men were now beginning to grow restless, looking for excitement, and hastening by any means to make money.

Naturally the old charge of a false and deceiving temper has been given new currency by tales of broken parole. Boers who have spoken to me have condemned the breaking of parole as strongly and sincerely as any Englishman could do. But they will never justify the policy which insists on an oath of neutrality and at the same time gives no protection to the farmers. "I have been with the Boer armies all down the western side of the Transvaal and Orange Free State," said one very intelligent and honorable man, "and I have seen the utterly defenceless state of these poor people." An English force sweeping over the country comes to an isolated farm where a man with a wife and three children under five years old lives three miles from his nearest neighbor. They demand his oath under threats, and leave him in return, for his sole and sorry protection, a flimsy scrap of paper such as I have seen, perhaps a

quarter the size of a sheet of notepaper, stating that he is not to be molested by any British army; and the troop marches off on its way. A month later comes a body of a thousand Boers; they recognize no oath to the enemy, and the man has again his choice between death and service with them. Boers as strong in condemnation of a broken word as the loftiest of Englishmen have seen, what the English at home have not seen, the actual situation of that unhappy farmer. They can guess what some English farmers might do in a like calamity; and they believe that where the man is to be left perfectly helpless the taking of his oath by force can only be justified by force. It is war, not morals; and the officer who gives the oath under such conditions knows its value. A young lad, pale and delicate-looking, told me how he swore neutrality. The officer ordered him to take the oath, twice threatening to shoot him if he refused, and twice he said, "I will not take it." Then Captain X. put his revolver at his head, with his finger on the trigger. "Unless you take the oath you will have to face one of these balls." "I took it then," said the boy. I leave it to men of common sense to decide the value of an oath so administered. The boy failed to keep it when the army passed and the Boers reoccupied the place.

Another charge, the charge of ingratitude, is often brought against the Boers. It belongs to the cheap, emotional politics of the day. Statesmen and moralists of a more heroic time held that the only solid ground for dealing between men or nations is sheer plain justice, and for this what honorable man would ask thanks? No certainty or dignity on either side can exist if favors and magnanimities are to be given in a fit of emotional generosity one day and withdrawn the next in a fit of emotional prudence, on the

plea that the gift is inconvenient or that the full price of gratitude is not forthcoming. I do not know what man or country would not prefer a strict and unswerving justice to the chances of shifting benevolences, with sudden drafts presented for payment in gratitude. However, be that as it may, I am convinced that the Boer, against whom this charge of ingratitude is brought, is not an ungrateful man. As a wise and by no means sympathetic observer in the camp, one of another nation, said to me, "The Boer is grateful. It is absurd to say he is not. Of course, if you give him nothing, so far as he can see, he will not be grateful; but ingratitude is not his fault. He has many, but not that."

In private relations they are undoubtedly a grateful people. I was told by men from whom I could have least expected it, that the prisoners were, I cannot, alas! say comforted, but in some sense relieved by having an opportunity to tell their sorrow. Many came to see me. An unknown man brought to the tent door the photographs of his family. Others unknown brought gifts of carvings. In one case a Boer officer came to the tent door: "A burgher wishes to give you this stick," and he vanished, nor did I ever know the name of the good burgher. Many, indeed, were the gifts and addresses of thanks which told from day to day of the gratitude and warm kindness of the Boers—the gifts, I believe, had been subscribed for among these poor men and bought from the carvers. I ought to say, perhaps, that I had carried nothing to commend myself. I brought no present. I did not buy of the camp manufacturers. I explained that I belonged to no party and was no politician, or able to do anything for them. They felt simply that one who sympathized with sorrow need be no stranger in that camp.



Commandant Wolmarans, whom English and Boers, without a single exception, respect and honor, held my hand in both of his while he begged, through the interpreter, that I would remember them, that I would always remember them in my prayers. He begged it yet again. A group of old men sat round silent and deeply moved. A gray-headed commandant whom I had often seen, but whom I had never heard speak, came forward with the only words I ever heard from him, and certainly the only words of English he knew, and shook my hand. "God bless you, Mrs. Green," he said. In my visit I made, indeed, many friends in camp—friends whom I shall long remember, and hope to meet again in a happier scene.

For Deadwood Camp is a place of sorrow. In saying this I know I am going against the general voice of St. Helena. The island is universally proud of the wholesome influence of its trade-winds, even if the camp turns into a soaking bog under winter rains, and in summer suffers actual water-famine. Five months ago miserable men were landed here; some had been imprisoned over three months in ships; fed on biscuit and bully beef, shut down from air, and only allowed one hour in twenty-four on deck; packed tightly in ships which had been used for cattle and were horribly infested with vermin, the most intolerable suffering to these men; for four months they had had no change of clothes, day or night from what they wore on the battlefield. Others had come from the horrors of Paardeberg. They had lain, over nine hundred of them, for over a week in the sultry harbor of Jamestown till the camp was ready. Broken with suffering and misery they took six hours to march the five miles to the camp and their aspect filled all who saw them with pity. There was some sickness among them at first, but

in the healthy breezes and the sunshine their strength returned; and fever has by this time practically died out. There is scarcely any illness now, save among the very old and a few cases of wounds. In the Hospital, by the wise and kind arrangement of the doctor, the sick Boers are nursed by orderlies of their own race, willing to come from the camp to minister to their compatriots.

There are important problems with regard to camp life which deserve the fullest discussion. But at the best is there no room left for tragedy and sorrow?

There is a great effort in the camp itself to preserve a vigorous and cheerful air. Sports were got up while I was there, which had an excellent effect in raising their spirits. Many of the prisoners are wonderfully industrious. They work hard at the new occupations they have discovered, of carving and the like. Some found a teacher and learned what they could of languages or arithmetic. About forty of them are allowed to work for some island people at gardening or painting. Those who are employed, however, must of course be few. The rest have to bear their burden in idleness. It was melancholy to see the boys. When I tried to take a photograph of the lads it looked like a small school. Young as they are, they look even younger than their age, and one's heart sorrows for children in such a camp. In some of the strong young men the devil's work of bitterness and despair is being carried out; for "great distress has never hitherto taught, and while the world lasts it will never teach, wise lessons to any part of mankind." Others have patience and unquenchable fortitude; their private griefs they carry with a grave reserve so far as outsiders go, which deceives, as I came to think, the unobservant looker-on. In all talk the first question is the public welfare, the

fate of their country; the rest lies next to it in God's hands. A few have broken down from grief. One, of French blood originally, was sent into a melancholy mania by the sight of a photograph of his wife and children sent to him; others were growing old men and grave. "This is a place where men grow very serious," a young man said to me; "some of them laugh no more, some have grown gray. I am glad I am not married." One or more have died of senile decay. A few others that I saw will probably follow in the same sad road; it seemed inconceivable, on any theory of war, that it should be necessary to carry as prisoners to St. Helena the group I saw newly brought in—old men over sixty-five, bowed down by paralysis and various infirmities, sitting there motionless, a sick and hopeless company, on the edge of the grave. It seemed as if they had been transported by mistake. I have read and heard, as we all have, a cheap and vulgar mockery of the Boer religious services. But no observer can go to the Sunday gatherings of the camp, and sit in the very midst of the people as I did, without seeing a sight that is not laughable, old far-seeing men "waiting still upon God," while on some, not all, but in truth on some of the younger faces (very poor men, I thought), there was an ecstasy of rapt entreaty for "a present help in time of trouble."

"How could you face war?" I said to a trembling old man of sixty-five, who had volunteered to fight. "I prayed to the Lord," he said; "I gave myself and my family to His care. And it was wonderful to see how He strengthened us. There was not a tear. One daughter carried my rifle, the other my bandoller, and my wife (she is sixty-three) carried my bag. They were all quiet; you would never have thought, I was going away. I did a soldier's duty; I did what I had to

do. It is strange, in the heat of a fight you do not care what happens. You shoot, and you do not care. How it should come that a thing like that can happen I do not know, but it does happen to a man. But, oh, it is a bitter thing to think of afterwards! When I think of what I saw all round me I shiver with horror. Believe me, I can scarcely keep the tears out of my eyes at night when I think of the sufferings I have seen. I grieve as much for the widows in England as for those of our own people. I know I am a prisoner, and must be obedient," he added. "I have my parole and can go a little way out of the camp, and sit down quietly to read. I am thankful they give me that liberty." I said a word of sympathy. "It is well," he answered gently, "that we have the Bible left."

I was often touched to see how the prisoners share the burdens of a common calamity. There is much tenderness to the old and afflicted, and gentleness and respect to those whose sacrifices were conspicuous. I remember the general anxiety that I should humor by taking his photograph a poor, shaking, deaf old man who had nine sons and sons-in-law in the war, and, coming into the camp to see some of them, had been taken prisoner of war. The whole crowd stood him up, and sat him down, stroked his gray locks, and turned his battered slouch hat up and down to see what particular cock became him best, and shouted explanations in the deaf old ears.

I have unfortunately met some men and women who can feel no compassion for any sorrows which are the just deserts, as they think, of men who have fought against England. By such a spirit as this do we hope to make Imperial rule beloved! This, however, was the feeling of those who "stood afar off." There is many a true Englishman, who has reflected on the story of his own people, who, if he himself

could see into the tents of the Boers,  
must feel grief and awe that sorrow  
of the quality there known should lie  
under the English flag. Truly the les-  
sons of tragedy may be learned there;  
"to raise and afterwards to calm the  
The Nineteenth Century.

passions, to purge the soul from pride,  
by the examples of human miseries,  
which befall the greatest—in few  
words, to expel arrogance and intro-  
duce compassion."

*Alice Stopford Green.*

---

**A REMINISCENCE.—FROM THE LINKS.**

Ere generous summer tossed about  
Flush gratitude, or gave in lieu  
Of winter rains their more than due,  
I went to hear the thrushes shout  
And love-lorn linnets take their cue.

The random gorses one by one  
Gilded their spikes with orange tip,  
And boughs now red with haw and hip  
Were coyly holding to the sun  
The offer of a virgin lip.

The pine trees stood like masts and flung  
Their sails about to taste the breeze,  
And sailor tomtits by the knees  
On rigging-rope and yard-arm swung  
In fashion fearless as you please.

A shrew mouse pattered from the wood,  
Two nimble squirrels gambolled lithe,  
The fresh buds felt the swelling pith,  
The young life knew the rising blood  
And zest of life that comes therewith.

Now ruddy flames have touched the leaf;  
The ash is blackened by the frost;  
The life beneath the trees is lost;  
The seed is carried home in sheaf;  
The birds are still who carolled most.

Yet never dies the spring; to-day  
I catch the pink upon the larch—  
The promise of the rainbow arch—  
For memory makes November May,  
And Hope is busy with buds of March.

Literature.

*W. Beach Thomas.*

## A PARISIAN HOUSEHOLD.\*

BY PAUL BOURGET.

## IX.

## HECTOR LE PRIEUX' PLAN.

"I have my plan—" It was with these words, uttered for the third time, that Hector Le Prieux left his daughter's lover, and set forth armed with the letter which he had made him write, and also with Reine's despatch. "I will send it back to you to-morrow, with the latest tidings," he had said; "I need it now."

It was evident that this note touched a tender spot in his heart, for as he turned again into the Luxembourg garden, Charles, who was watching him from the balcony, saw him spelling out word by word the dear handwriting, so absorbed by the thoughts it called up that he did not see where he was until he emerged at the farther gate, having crossed the garden in a sort of dream. He had been in the habit, in his early days, of reading his morning paper at a café adjoining the Odéon, and hither he now turned unconsciously. By chance it had remained unaltered; decorated, years before, by impecunious artists who had thus paid their scores, its walls still displayed four ill-assorted panels, representing Venus arising from the sea, a dying stag in a thicket, Pierrot gazing at the moon, and a grizette of the Latin Quarter. The Bohemianism of this smoky tavern was as little in harmony with the delicate romance of Reine and her cousin, as with the habits of refined society which Hector had long observed. But the glamor of his youth hung about this resort of students and

*rapins*. He seated himself at a vacant table, without even noticing the attention excited among the habitués of the place—a somewhat disorderly crew, both men and women—by the presence of a man past fifty, dressed like a president of the council, and wearing his ribbon of the Legion of Honor in his button-hole.

He called for writing-materials, and drew up in a bold and rapid hand, on this tavern-paper, a letter of two pages, which he signed with almost aggressive firmness. This was addressed to Crucé, and despatched at once by a messenger. Is it necessary to add that it cut short in his own name and his wife's, all projects for a matrimonial alliance with the Faucherots?

This business accomplished—the first step in his plan—he looked at his watch, and saw that if he returned home at this hour, he should meet neither his wife nor his daughter. He at first thought of proceeding at once to his office to talk over his next day's *chronique* with the editor, as he often did. But the bare idea of entering upon his daily round before going through with the two interviews for which he was fortifying himself, was odious to him. A reminiscence of the habits of his youth crossed his mind. "Why should I not write here as I used to do?" he thought, and taking up the pen once more, he began to write as deliberately as before, his reflections upon the reckless extravagance and luxury of the Paris life of to-day. When six o'clock struck, he was still there scribbling his twelfth sheet. His *chronique* for the next day was done; he reread it with a singular mixture of pride and despondency—for the first

\* Translated for The Living Age by Mary D. Frost. Copyright by The Living Age Company.

time in years he had written something of which he was not secretly ashamed, —something out of his own heart, to please himself, and not as a task. This diatribe against luxury and its thralldom had not only killed two weary hours for the journalist; it had strengthened his determination to save his daughter from a mercenary marriage and a ruined life.

"Six o'clock," he said to himself, as he crossed the threshold of the café; "I shall find a cab in front of the Odéon; at half-past six I shall be at home, and have a few moments to talk with Reine before dinner. The important thing is that the poor child should not pass her night in grief. How happy she will be to get Charles's letter! Fanny Perrin was right, she would have died of grief over that other marriage— But how did she ever make up her mind to it? That is what I shall soon know!" He stopped an empty cab and jumped in. The question to which his mind had turned incessantly since the previous evening took possession of him again:

"What could Mathilde have said to Reine to conquer her resistance which she was so unwilling to reveal to her cousin? and why, on the other hand, is her mother so bent on this marriage? These Faucherots have nothing to recommend them but their money—money! Yes, but Mathilde does not worship money, she is so generous! And yet it is true that in this ridiculous life we lead it is impossible to calculate the yearly increase in our expenses. It is just as I have been saying in that article—" And all at once, by an irresistible association of ideas, he began to ask himself how his own budget stood at the moment, and in the midst of this mental calculation an unexpected hypothesis presented itself, which he tried to set aside, but in vain: "Good heavens! what if Mathilde has run into debt? What if she were under pecu-

niary obligations to the Faucherots? Heaven grant this may not be the true reason for her desiring this marriage and for Reine's consenting to it!—no, it cannot be!—it cannot be!"

Thus the sort of subconscious activity which goes on in the mind under the influence of intense excitement had led this husband, whose disposition was so far from inquisitorial, close to the actual truth. He was "burning," as children express it, in the game of hide-and-seek. This divination was to render the execution of the plan of which he had spoken to Charles all the more painful.

The plan was this: to hand Charles's letter to Reine, and wring from her in the first rush of emotion on reading it a full avowal of her love and acceptance of Charles. He would then undertake to conquer his wife's opposition. It was for this purpose that he had wished to keep the despatch. In the presence of such an undeniable proof of their child's inclination, she could not persist in a project of whose cruelty she had hitherto had no conception. The mysterious reason which Reine had refused to reveal might turn out after all to be a mere misunderstanding. Although he clung to this idea with the whole power of his love for his wife, still this man, so clear-sighted where his heart was not concerned, could not drive away that new suspicion which had arisen, as it seemed, in the most fortuitous way.

As he opened the door of the apartment with the little gold latch-key—a present from his wife—which he wore as a charm on his watch-chain, this idea assailed him anew; and at the same time the recollection came into his mind of one of the leading Paris publishers, who had said to him a short time before: "I am founding a new Review, *Le Prieux*. Why should you not write your reminiscences for me? Afterwards I will publish them



in book form, and we will make a double success of it. How does the idea strike you?" "My reminiscences," the journalist had answered, "why, I have never had time to live—where should I have found time for them?" Why did he recall this conversation now unless he was already seeking in his own mind for some means of increasing his yearly income? What deficiency was he trying to make up?

In any case his thoughts were turned in another direction on entering the apartment by seeing the overcoat and cane of a visitor on the hall table, and the small groom who filled also the place of footman, replied to his question that Monsieur Crucé was in the salon with Madame.

"And Mademoiselle, also?" asked Le Prieux.

"Mademoiselle is in her room," replied the groom. "She has not been out to-day, she is not well."

Crucé there at this hour! It was evident then that Mathilde had received warning of the domestic *coup d'état* by which he, Hector, had substituted a refusal for the letter of acceptance he had undertaken to deliver. Therefore an immediate explanation between him and his wife was inevitable. Le Prieux did not hesitate. He must see Reine first, so that he might have full power to act. He said to the servant: "Do not disturb Madame. You need not say that I have come in;" and he proceeded at once to his daughter's room. His knock was answered in a scarcely audible voice, and the tears sprang to his eyes, so clearly did he understand the weariness of that tone.

He was still more moved, on entering, to find the room absolutely dark. Under pretext of a headache, Reine had thrown herself upon her bed after drawing the curtains and closing the blinds, seeking that voluntary darkness into which a woman instinctively creeps and buries herself, under the

influence of a certain sort of suffering, as if light added one more to the brutalities of life for her.

When she had turned on the electricity—that hard, white glare, which brings every line of the face into harsh relief—her father saw a countenance so altered by suffering, that he feared for an instant the effect that sudden joy might have upon her. But she had already propped herself upon her elbow on the embroidered pillows of her little bed, just as she used to do in her childhood when he came in on his way to the theatre to bid her good-night; and with childlike grace and that consideration for others which was one of the lovely traits of this tender nature, she said: "You must not be anxious about me, dearest *Pée*. I took a little cold on my way home from the class. But keeping warm in bed will soon cure it—and to-morrow, the day of your great *chronique*, I shall be up early to get everything ready for you."

"You must rest first of all," answered Hector, and taking from his pocket the sheets scrawled at the café: "My article is written, so your *Pée* will not need you just now, little wren, and for once you can be as lazy as you please! And besides," he went on, after a pause, in a tone which he strove to keep playful, but in which his inward agitation thrilled through the assumed gaiety, "and besides, I have a letter for you from some one—" and opening his pocket-book, he drew forth Charles's letter.

"From some one?" questioned Reine, but as soon as she took the letter in her hand and recognized the writing, the blood rushed in a crimson flood to her cheeks, and she began to tremble in a convulsive way that shook her whole frame, while her father tried to calm her.

"Read your letter, my darling child, and have no further fear. Take heart—You must know from my bringing:

you this message that Charles has told me all, and that I approve all. We must do away with all misunderstandings. Read your letter, my sweet wren, read your letter—do not try to talk to me till you have read it. I love you so dearly, my child, my little girl—” and again mingling jest with his petting, as if to spare her youthful sensitiveness too great a strain of emotion: “If you will not read your letter, child, I shall have to take it back and read it aloud to you!”

While Le Prieux was speaking another rush of color streamed over Reine's brow and cheeks, and even over her slender neck, as it rose out of the soft ruffles of her muslin wrapper, over which her long hair floated about her shoulders. Her arms showed thin and white and blue-veined from the loose open sleeves; the coverlet was scarcely raised by the slight form beneath it which seemed too fragile and delicate for her age. As her father watched her opening the envelope with trembling hands he was more moved than ever by the sight of his child's fragility. He felt for her that parental compassion which is like no other feeling and which makes a father and mother devoted slaves to the slightest wish of a creature who seems to them so helpless, so tender, so easily wounded. How gladly at such moments they would give their lives to save their child from the least suffering, the slightest pain. Thus it was that as Reine's face suddenly altered and turned white on reading Charles's petition for pardon, and as he saw her eyelids close and her head droop upon the pillow in a half-swoon from excess of emotion, Le Prieux, seized with a sudden terror, caught his child in his arms, pressing her hands in his, kissing her on the forehead and crying:

“Reine, Reine, my child, come to yourself, I implore you! Awkward brute that I am! I thought you were

going to be happy and smile at me! My little girl, let me see you smile. Has this joy hurt you? Ah! your eyes are opening, you are smiling again. But how have you managed to keep such a secret shut up in your poor little heart? The other morning when your mother spoke to you, why did you not say to us, ‘I love Charles, and he loves me’? Well, that is all over—one more smile for me—he has asked for your hand; you are to be his wife—why do you shake your head like that?”

“Because I cannot be his wife,” answered Reine, and even in the stifled tones of her voice her father recognized the same strange accents of decision which had struck him when she refused the offered respite.

“You will not be his wife? But why?”

“Because I have reflected,” rejoined Reine, in a still firmer tone, “and I do not believe we could be happy—”

“No, my child,” interrupted Le Prieux sadly, putting his hand over her mouth. “Do not try to deceive me again—I know all, you see, so it is no longer possible—yes, I know all about your meeting at the ball, what your cousin said to you, and your reply. Could you have spoken so if you had not believed you could be happy with him, and could make him happy? When you embraced me yesterday on your way to your mother's room I knew what you were thinking. Shall I tell you? You thought that your mother was about to propose to you a marriage with Charles, and you were very, very happy. Do not deny it; I read it in your eyes at the moment, but I did not then understand all—I understand now. I know that you wrote to your cousin yesterday, and that you met him this morning. Do not blush, my love, do not tremble so. If you could read my heart you would find there nothing but remorse at not having divined yours. But your heart is

transparent to me now. The reason why you will not marry the man you love—that reason which Charles implored you to tell him and you would not—I know that, too! It concerns us, our situation. You said to yourself: 'If I marry Edgar Faucherot I shall be rich, and papa will not have to work so hard.' Confess that this was what you thought. You are like your mother, you are worried about my working so much. But it is my life to write. I am an old horse that must die in harness, and if I stop to rest I shall drop at once. What I need is not to give up writing, but to be able to say to myself when I sit down to my desk, 'My little Wren is happy!' and as to our debts—" He scrutinized his daughter's face as he pronounced these words which were so terrible to him. If Reine did not give a start of denial, it would be because they were indeed in debt and she knew it.

She did start, but uttered no word of denial and her father went on, resorting to a ruse to convince his child, which will certainly not be set down to him as a sin by the recording angel: "As for our debts, I shall not even be obliged to work harder in order to settle them. I have had an offer lately for my farms at Chevagnes—" They had, in fact, been mortgaged for years to their full value. "I shall not want them," he went on, "now that I shall have a country home to retire to when I am old, down there in Provence with you! For it is to be 'yes'—you must say 'yes' to me, and you shall marry Charles. Come, child, must I get your mother to ask you?"

"Oh," moaned Reine, "mamma will never consent to the marriage."

"But if she should consent? If she were to ask you herself? Would it be 'yes' then, tell me?"

"It would be 'yes,'" said the girl, so low that this avowal of her love for

her cousin, and renunciation of her great sacrifice, escaped her less like a speech than a sigh; and throwing her arms round her father's neck, she hid her blushing face on his shoulder.

How little this embrace resembled the frigid kiss of the morning which had sealed Reine's betrothal to young Faucherot! At this moment, clasped heart to heart, they tasted that absolute communion of two souls, that perfect union which the passion of love with its caprices and jealousies rarely knows, which is rare, even in friendship, but which is the divine poetry of family affection—a reward for all its homely and painful duties, for all the depressing monotony, the narrowness and commonplaceness of daily life.

An interruption easy to foresee, but far from the thoughts of Reine and her father was about to tear them hastily from the ineffable sweetness of this mutual understanding, and awaken in the father an energy and presence of mind which he had never shown before, which he was never to show on his own account in the future.

Madame Le Prieux had entered the room. Hector knew too well every change of expression in that beautiful and haughty face, which he had loved so well—which he loved so fondly still—to be in doubt for a moment as to her mood, especially as he was aware of her just having seen Crucé. She was in a state of high indignation. That her husband should have dared what he had dared, that he should have intercepted a letter of hers, a letter agreed upon between them, and substituted for it another, written by himself, and in precisely opposite terms—this was so monstrous a proceeding that she could scarcely credit it! The outbreak of her wrath was suspended by a sort of stupor. She could not believe Hector to be responsible for this act of audacity. The look she now turned upon her daughter plainly showed that in

her secret soul she regarded her as the guilty one. But her imperious lips had no time to question her two victims, so completely docile hitherto to the dictates of her egotism. She had not advanced two steps into the room before Le Prieux sprang to meet her with a look of exaltation she had never seen on his usually calm face, and addressed her in a voice at once affectionate and masterful, in which she felt, with ever-growing amazement, an authority admitting of no reply:

"I was going in search of you, Mathilde, to bring you to this child of ours who does not confide in us, who is not willing to believe that we have no wish but for her happiness, and that we only proposed this marriage with young Faucherot in the belief that her heart was free. She has just confessed to me that it is not free, that she loves her cousin, Charles, and is beloved by him! And that simpleton of a Charles did not dare to come to us, to you and me, and say, 'I love Reine!' Can you fancy such folly? If I had not seen Charles to-day, if I had not forced this confession first from him, then from her, we should have been left completely in the dark. Do you understand that she was about to do us this wrong,—to you, her mother, and to me, her father—of marrying a man she did not love? Come, Reine, kiss your mother, and ask her forgiveness—hers and mine—for not having trusted us, for not having realized that we wished you to be perfectly free, the absolute mistress of your choice—Is it not so, Mathilde?"

"Reine has always been free," responded her mother, literally suffocated by what she had heard, "and if she really loves her cousin, I do not understand—"

"If she loves him?" he broke in, and added firmly, his eyes fixed upon his wife's: "yes, she loves him and she shall marry him—" Then as he saw

that Mathilde in her turn was about to interrupt: "Happily, we have not yet replied to our cousin Huguenin—For Reine does not yet know that she has written to sound us on the subject. The excellent lady is a provincial; she therefore felt obliged to make such cautious advances that we should never have guessed her to be writing with her son's concurrence, should we, Mathilde? We supposed that she was acting on her own responsibility. But that is all made right now—"

At this mention of the letter from Charles's mother, Madame Le Prieux was so utterly disconcerted that she had no strength to reply. Hector then knew of the existence of this letter and of her dissimulation! How was this? And yet he forgave her for so deceiving him! He did more, he was trying to prevent their daughter from ever finding it out! and in her rising confusion and amazement, Madame Le Prieux had not even the strength to resist her husband's hand, as he drew her towards Reine's bed, saying:

"And do you know why this naughty child was hiding her real feelings from us? It was because she thought it her duty to be rich for my sake, to save me from overwork. And it is all your fault my dear—yes, yours—you have set her the example. Why were you afraid to tell me what you have told her, that we have run a little into debt? You too are afraid that I shall have a few more articles to write—confess it! But what is that compared with the grief of seeing our child unhappy? I should never have forgiven myself—"

Did he really believe what he was saying, this poor slave of literature, or was this one more magnanimous falsehood to save the mother's prestige in the eyes of her daughter? Love has such blindnesses. It has also delicacy in its insight, and indulgence to temper its clearest judgments. What-

ever Hector's motive, his words implied an extreme of generosity which would have moved any wife but Mathilde to tears. But this woman's pride had intensified the perversion of conscience which enabled her to believe that she was laboring always for the best interests of her husband and daughter. What she now perceived in her husband's speech was that Reine had broken her word. How could the wife, accustomed to find in her husband the most credulous and indulgent of men, have guessed the process of cautious induction by which he had arrived at the truth?

Her indignation, as a mother, at what she regarded as the perfidy of her child, had all the ingenuousness in its violence which is the only excuse for natures like hers. Their excessive egotism would be inhuman if it were not to a certain degree unconscious. And moreover, "the beautiful Madame Le Prieux" experienced a frightful sense of humiliation at finding herself caught in a gross deception by the man who had hitherto worshipped her as an idol. She found solace under this painful sensation in assuming an attitude of virtuous indignation toward another in his presence.

Scarcely had Hector ceased speaking, when snatching her hand from his, and drawing back from the bedside, she said: "As for me, I shall never forgive Reine for betraying what I wished to keep from you. Yes, it is quite true," she went on, "I wanted to hide from you certain money difficulties in which we had become involved. It was my right to do so—more than that, my duty. It is true that I saw—that I still see—in this marriage with Edgar Faucherot an excellent establishment for Reine, one most appropriate to her position and ours. Nevertheless, if she had chosen to confide in me as she has in you"—here the secret jealousy she had al-

ways felt at Reine's partiality for her father broke out in words—"I should have left her free to decide in accordance with what she believed to be her true feeling. It was not necessary that she should resort to duplicity—"

"Mamma!" implored Reine, clasping her hands.

"She does not deserve to have you speak to her like that," interposed her father; "she has told me nothing. It is I who have guessed everything."

"She has contrived to let you guess everything," persisted the mother, "and that is still worse. I repeat that I can never forgive her. However," she concluded with concentrated bitterness, "you are her father and the head of the family. You wish her to marry her cousin. She will marry him. She will go and live in the provinces, far from Paris, in a narrow, *bourgeois* way, entirely cut off from the world. She will then be *really* unhappy! All I ask of you and of her is that you will never come to ask my pity for her wretchedness. I have done all in my power to save her from it."

With this she turned to go out, casting at her husband and daughter this parting malediction in the name of that "struggle for high-life" which she had exalted into a creed, a religion. She did not even turn her head to listen to a last appeal from Reine, who called after her:

"Oh, mamma, do not go like that—let me explain to you—" and as the door closed on her mother, the poor girl threw herself into her father's arms, sobbing out: "Mamma does not love me! oh, she does not love me!"

"Never say that, my child," cried Le Prieux in tones of real distress. "Never say it—never think it. It is because your mother loves you too much that she is so passionately moved over your marriage. Her anger will pass. I shall see her directly and explain all to her. She will understand,



or if she does not fully understand, you must say to yourself that it is partly your fault—Yes, your fault, my poor Reine! You are like me, you cannot show yourself as you are. All that your mother has done in this affair, as in everything else, has been for what she thought your good, yours and mine. She has had the same ambition for us which she would have liked us to have for her. You may ask anything of a person, you see, except to look at life from your point of view! She was born a great lady, and you and I, after all, are only peasants at heart. We are not like these people here; but she cannot be expected to see that—Above all my child, never allow yourself to bear a grudge against your mother on my account, as I have sometimes seen that you were tempted to do. I spoke the truth just now—a few articles more or less to write do not matter to me. You have dreamed I know, of my writing a book some day—some work of poetry or romance. It is too late, too late! If I were free, if I had abundant leisure, I could not do it now. I have shown you too plainly that this made me sad at times. It is true, I have often been sad in these last years! I have gone about with the air of a man whose life is a failure. You have believed too much in me, my sweetest Reine, when I was expressing these regrets, and you have been tempted to lay the blame at your mother's door. Do not deny it—but look me in the face!" and taking his daughter's hands in both of his, he forced her to meet his gaze, eye to eye, and all the pride of a generous soul, conscious of being that which he has willed to be, suddenly shone in the face of this great lover: "You may read the depths of my heart, child—I am sincere before you as I should be in the presence of death. No, my life is not a failure. When at the age of twenty I longed to

be a poet, what did that word mean to me? It meant to have beautiful dreams and to realize them. Well, I have had the most beautiful of dreams, and I have made it a reality—for I have married the woman I loved, she has been happy with me—and I have you, my daughter. Your mother's happiness—that is *my work*—" Then as if afraid of his own emotion and his own self-revelation, he shook his head, and added, with his habitual smile of gentle irony: "not my whole work, however, only the first volume. The second is to be your happiness—you must help me to publish it—and do you know many volumes in the whole range of literature which are worth those two?"

X.

EPILOGUE.

It is now three years since the second volume—to adopt his own harmless pleasantry—of the "Complete Works of Hector Le Prieux," was published under the form of the marriage bans of Mademoiselle Reine-Marie-Thérèse Le Prieux and Monsieur Charles Photius Huguenin, and it is just two years since the birth of a little daughter, baptized Mathilde, brought about a formal reconciliation between Reine's mother and this happy pair of wedded lovers. They are living on the shores of a sapphire sea, beneath the cloudless skies of the South, amidst olive groves and pines. Fanny Perrin has been promoted to the rank of governess, and they form one family with Charles's father and mother in the hereditary *mas*, shielded from the mistral by its black screen of ancient cypresses against which the roses tremble. "The beautiful Madame Le Prieux" is still a living incarnation of Vanity-Fair, of that brilliant and artificial Paris, where everybody lives only to covet his neighbor's luxury.

Reine's mother has kept her word: she has never really forgiven her daughter for a happiness which she looks upon as an instance of the basest ingratitude. In the sort of campaign which she has undertaken for the conquest of high society, she regards her daughter much as Napoleon must have regarded the Saxons when he saw them in full retreat from the battlefield of Leipsic. But her will, like Napoleon's, is not one that surrenders, and you may see her any day—if you are of the same world—pursuing undaunted her daily routine, celebrating its minutest rites and submitting to its pettiest exactions, without aim, since she has no longer a daughter to establish, without hope of reward—all for honor! Her name figured this very morning in a society column, among the distinguished guests at a smart wedding, such as she desired for Reine. Yesterday her name appeared again, in the list of guests at "Madame de Bonnavet's select dinner at her sumptuous hotel in the Rue d' Artois." You may have noticed it the day before, in the same column, as one of the patronesses of a charity concert under the auspices of the Duchess de Contay; and if you chanced to be present at the first night of "Hannibal," the new drama in verse by René Viney, you cannot have failed to see Madame Le Prieux enthroned in the stage-box which has for years been assigned to the well-known dramatic critic. She was seated in the front of the box beside the young Countess de Bec-Crespin and was more befrilled and belaced and bedecked—more, in short, "the beautiful Madame Le Prieux"—than ever, and if chance had permitted, you to catch snatches of the conversation in the opposite box where the Molans and the Fauriels were posing also as "Parisian notabilities," you would have heard the judgment passed upon this veteran of the "sacred battalion"

of fashion by two of its prettiest women and two of its leading artists.

"She is a perfect wonder, Madame Le Prieux," Laurence Fauriel was saying: "I never saw her handsomer than she is to-night:—positively Madame de Bois Crespin looks the older of the two. What luck some husbands have! There is Le Prieux, as ordinary as he can be, and without a spark of talent—he married the Venus of Milo and she turns out a model wife into the bargain."

"And what is more, she will end by landing him in the Academy, in spite of himself," said Marie de Molan: "Won't she, Jacques?"

"Oh yes, quite so!" replied the novelist-playwright, "he was sounding me the other day as to my intentions, with an amount of finesse which showed clearly enough what his plans were. It is with this object in view, doubtless, that he is giving the world that stuff he calls his "Reminiscences." He must at least write one volume of some sort, to give his energetic wife the shadow of a shade of a pretext. With that, she is quite capable of scraping together a score of votes for him! And such a fine creature as she is too—what a pity she is so handicapped!"

"True enough, she is devilishly handsome," rejoined Fauriel, who got his clothes in London and his language in Bohemia; and with his artist's eye he proceeded to scan Madame Le Prieux's points through his opera-glass; "what a line of the head! what a curve of the neck! what an arch of the eyebrows! How she's built, by Jove! At sixty, at seventy, she will still be magnificent. It's in the blood, by the way—the daughter was pretty, too! What has become of her?"

"She is in the South—as much married as ever," said Laurence Fauriel. "To that little cousin we used to see with them sometimes—an absurd marriage that distressed her mother great-

ly. The little goose must be dreadfully sick of it by this time. I saw her last autumn when she spent a few days here. She is as pretty as ever, but it is easy to see that Madame Le Prieux does not dress her nowadays."

"Reine spent a few days in Paris?" exclaimed Madame Molan; "you never told me, and she did not come near me! That was not nice of her!"

"Oh, she didn't come to see me either," said Madame Fauriel; "it isn't her heart that will hurt her. I doubt if she even cares for her mother. If she had she would have married here in her own set—Such a charming mother too!"

"No doubt her daughter was jealous of her," concluded Jacques in a tone of indifference. This writer of successful imitations, whom we have seen shining by turns as a naturalist, a psychologist, a society novelist, an erotic novelist, a socialistic novelist, has at last settled down into a satirist. He does not emphasize his last remark, he merely throws it out casually, and then casting one more glance at the Le Prieux box; "Like father, like child" he says; "Come ladies, let us turn our attention to the play. It must be rather good just at this point, for that ass of a Le Prieux is putting on his air of not attending to it, of being somewhere else—"

He is indeed somewhere else at this moment, the husband of "the beautiful Madame Le Prieux," he is hundreds of miles away from the stage-box where his wife sits in triumph, and from that in which these

hirelings of art are dissecting him and his. He is leagues upon leagues away from the stage on which a set of soulless actors are declaiming to their blasé audience the machine-made verses of a modern playwright. The dramatic critic has been transported by fancy to the distant *mas* and sees Reine smiling upon him across the space that divides them, a tender smile, tinged with melancholy because of their separation but full of filial gratitude! This vision suffices to send a thrill of inexpressible happiness through the veins of the old journalist, and this is heightened by perceiving that his wife's beauty still attracts that admiration which she craves. He sits with half-closed eyes, forgetting the extra labors which are before him in order to rid himself of his load of debt, forgetting the chorus of spiteful criticisms which have greeted his volume of "*Reminiscences*," forgetting the *fauteuil* under the cupola of the Academy and his wife's eager quest of votes, forgetting his lassitude over meaningless pages of task-work, and the incurable longing for his abandoned art. All this he forgets in the profound delight of knowing that the only two creatures he has so ardently loved are happy—each in her own way—and that they owe their happiness to him.

No, his life is not a failure. He spoke truly when he told his daughter that he had realized his ideal. He came up to Paris in his youth—as he said to her—to be a poet. And who can be called a poet if he is not?

## AN AMAZING VAGABOND.

The ne'er-do-well is not always so pitiable as he is painted. Society often loves the fool of its family, and not seldom does a handsome scamp possess passports which no amount of mere honesty and sobriety can obtain. The history of notable and entertaining persons opens the page on many a Barry Lyndon, who by sheer impudence and raffishness has won his way to fortune and more luck than he deserved. Often enough, too, they have had the indulgence of an easy-going tolerance which in this sterner age has become almost impossible.

And this, too, was the luck of that amazing vagabond and scamp, Bampfylde Moore Carew, who, born a Devonshire Carew and godfathered by noblemen, in early life became a roving gypsy, and in that capacity and in countless disguises, tramped and cheated and masqueraded in every part of the southern and western counties of England—not to speak of the Continent and America. So daring were his exploits and such his genius for lying that he became as famous as he was successful, and was elected "king" of the gypsies while still a young man. Cousin to half the best blood in Cornwall, Devon and Somerset, he took a special delight in victimizing the class from which he sprang; and to this day one of the most interesting features of his extraordinary career lies in the fact that he imposed an unparalleled series of audacious tricks on the well-known men of a century and a half ago, whose names are very familiar to us as borne by their descendants to-day, who live and flourish in the very homes in which Carew the Gypsy King played with the credulity and misused the benevolence of their forefathers.

To a man like myself, born and reared in the West, such a past is no mere history. I can follow every furlong of the road along which Bampfylde Carew limped—as the soundest cripple thereabouts—from Exeter to Axminster; every yard of his path as he went up to "Squire" Portman's house to impose audaciously upon him; every step of the way he went from Halswell to the spot where, disguised as a most respectable old housewife, he had a terrible fit in the road, and so extracted the dole which Sir Charles Tynte—the Tyntes are still at Halswell—had sworn he would never give to Carew, disguise himself as he would! That strange visit to the Lord Weymouth of his day; that escapade at Taunton, with its sequel in the jail; the pranks at Dunster; the rout of the Revenue officers on the coast of South Devon, when there was something in smuggling and smuggling was something—these and a hundred more of such incidents are so connected with historic names and well-known places that no dweller in Wessex could fail to find an almost personal interest in the history of this well-bred and ill-conditioned scamp; while the story of his life, not to speak of its problems, has a whimsical charm for his fellow-sinners on earth—at any rate, as long as their pulses beat quick and their blood runs warm.

Bampfylde Moore Carew was the son of Theodore Carew, rector of Bickleigh, or Bickley, near Tiverton, and was born in July, 1693. It was a family living, and is to this day held by a Carew. His Christian names were those of his godfathers who "tossed up" to decide whose should come first. In due course he went to that good old centre of flogging and letters, Blundell's School, at

Tiverton, and here it was that the crisis in his life came to him. For at that time the schoolboys of Tiverton kept up between them a pack of hounds, and Carew had distinguished himself above his fellows by his powers of running and jumping, and by a "Hi, tantivy-tantivy!" of such merit that we must suppose it was not unlike John Peel's, whose "view-halloa would waken the dead or a fox from his lair in the morning." He also learnt, probably from some keeper of the better sort (and they are made from penitent poachers), a method of enticing dogs to obey and follow him—no slight accomplishment for those sons of the soil who so love the fat game that, having none of their own, they cannot rest until they acquire that of their neighbors. All these accomplishments stood him in good stead in later life, and "The Dog Stealer" became one of his most common and not undeserved sobriquets. Curiously enough, the pack of hounds was permitted by the school authorities, even when used for a questionable variety of sporting purposes, though the fox was, of course, the supreme quarry. Now, just before harvest-time one year, as ill-luck would have it, a red deer wandered into the neighborhood of Tiverton; and promptly enough the Tiverton School pack followed in pursuit. A grand run of many miles ended in the death of the deer—and enormous damage to the standing crops; and this speedily brought a deputation of yeomen and farmers to the school, and the ring-leaders were identified. The headmaster (a proficient of the birch) promised them a most drastic punishment, and, to make the more of it, held it over them until the next day.

But on the morrow Carew and three of his schoolfellows—Escott, Coleman and Martin—ran away from the horrors they could well imagine, and, falling in with a band of gypsies, then and

there joined them, cheerfully taking the oaths and going through the rude ritual imposed by gypsy custom. It is curious to note, by the way, that although all four were sons of persons of position and means, they never entirely turned their backs on people whom they then joined. Interludes of home-life there were, and circumstances in two cases ultimately brought responsibilities which could not well be shirked; but to the end all four retained an affection for the vagabond's life and exhibited a loyalty to the "Priggers," "Prancers," "Rufflers," "Swaddlers" and "Doxies"—as the gypsies are known among themselves—which I cannot help thinking should be put down to their credit.

Carew was now about sixteen years of age, and, just as he had shown himself to be apt at all his school work, so he soon proved to be as quick at acquiring the gypsy "cant" and lore. His superior education, his gift of ready speech, and the energy with which he threw himself into all the "cunning arts" of the gypsies, very soon gained him a reputation through the country-side; and when the gypsies wished to "cut bene whiddies," or prophesy smooth things to some fine lady, they selected him as likely to do the work best. He thus became their "dimber-damber man," which is equivalent to saying, I fear, that he was a prince among the rogues—the completest cheat of them all. His first opportunity was not long in coming, for no less a person than Lady Musgrave consulted him about a large sum of money which she believed to be secreted about her house. Carew, after an elaborate performance of ritual, gave it as his opinion that she was right, that the treasure lay near a particular tree, and that the day and hour for discovering it had been placed by the constellations exactly seven days forward from that time. Overjoyed by this confirmation



of her suspicions, the good soul gave him twenty guineas for his prophecy; but I regret to add that when seven days had elapsed Carew was far away, and no treasure could be found under any tree, dig however deep and wide ten sturdy laborers would!

After some time, compunction for the sorrow which his career was causing his parents, brought him back to Bickley. Here he stayed for several months; but in spite of all the natural ties of affection, he could not be happy, and one day he stole away and again joined the band with which he had formerly travelled. The next art he mastered was that of rat-catching and that of curing fits in cattle and dogs; and true to his new character, he now clothed himself in an old blanket as covering for his body, while of shoes and stockings he had none. He played, in fact, the part of "Poor mad Tom"—"Tom's a-cold! Who gives anything to poor Tom?" He would beat himself, eat coals, butt the wall, tear any garments given him, and generally play "the natural"—who, in country villages, is often considered endowed with special medical powers. By this means revenue poured in steadily for some time, and then, when his ground had been well covered, he reappeared as a poor farmer, ruined by a flood in which all his cattle had been drowned. Again was the metamorphosis complete, for now he was respectably dressed, and very quiet and simple became his demeanor. He went about with a wife and seven children—commodities always at hand and on hire in a gypsy gang. Such a wife is known by the gypsies as an "autem-mort"—i. e., a church-woman or married woman—not because she is necessarily going about with her husband, or is even married, but because she is accompanied by several children, though none of them need be her own! Disguise followed disguise, and I doubt not that he learnt in

his uninterrupted campaign against human credulity a good many useful facts connected with human character. But Carew was not content. His passion for land-wandering grew into one for earth-wandering. He wanted to know more of the world, and, falling in at Dartmouth with his old schoolfellow Escott, still playing the gypsy, the two worked their passage to Newfoundland. *Caelum non animus mutant*, and with his chosen career never out of his mind, Carew simply treated the island as a mine for future mendicant purposes. He lost no opportunity of ascertaining everything known about everybody of importance, and after the fishing season was over, set sail again for England, disembarking at Dartmouth. Within twenty-four hours he was earning a good living as an unfortunate sailor who, coming back from Newfoundland, had lost his all by shipwreck. He particularly sought out the merchants of Bristol and Plymouth, who traded with Newfoundland largely, and in proportion to the intimate information he could give them of that island did he receive of their abundance. The only change he made in this story was the date of the catastrophe and the name of the ship; for, with the sense of the claims of a topical event and an imaginative versatility which would have done credit to a modern journalist, Carew seldom let a shipwreck pass without turning it to account. Whenever the news of such a disaster reached the country, whether she had sailed from Weymouth or Poole or Plymouth or Bristol, Carew quickly appeared in the neighborhood of those places, the one survivor of the melancholy event! His month or two at sea and month or two in Newfoundland were well invested.

The next event in his life was his marriage—an elopement with a Miss Grey, the daughter of a surgeon at Newcastle-on-Tyne. He represented

himself to be a mate of a trading vessel then lying in the Tyne, and the lady, impressed by his good looks and soft words, consented to fly with him. As a matter of fact, she sailed with him—in a ship commanded by a friend of his, was very uncomfortable in the North Sea and the Channel for a number of days, and on arriving at Dartmouth, very downcast to learn that after all her husband was a gypsy and only a mate for her. But she was much stricken in love, and remembering that below all his disguises there lay, or slumbered, the gentleman, she forgave him, and extraordinary though it may seem, they remained throughout a long life devoted lovers. It is true they were seldom long together; months, and sometimes a year or more elapsed without their hearing of or seeing each other; but to the end they were devoted man and wife, and, when together, as happy as any couple could be.

It was not long before Carew was on the road again. The newly-married couple had stayed for a short time at Porchester with Carew's uncle, a well-to-do clergyman, who had offered to make him his heir if he would give up the vagabond life. But Carew could not be attracted by anything so secure, and within a week, taking his cue, as always, from his latest surroundings, was walking through Dorset and Somerset dressed in the gown and bands of a clergyman, mournfully and piously explaining to those he met that, although he had a wife and seven children, conscience had bidden him resign his Welsh living rather than take oath to the new government, the policy of which was so against his moral convictions. His extreme modesty scarcely permitted him to accept the many favors which his pious resignation extracted from the benevolent; but nevertheless, he had nothing to complain of for some time. Suddenly, however,

the country was horrified by news of a terrible shipwreck in the Bristol Channel, in which many Quakers, bound for Philadelphia, lost their lives; and as Somerset was somewhat of a Quaker stronghold, he flung away his gown and bands, turned down the flaps of his hat, and "thee'd" and "thou'd" all and sundry as he related his providential and marvelous escape from drowning in the recent shipwreck. And this way came revenue exceeding.

An amusing story is told of the rapidity with which this "lightning artist" changed his rôle. He knew the Portmans well, but when he called at Bryanston disguised as a rat-catcher they failed to recognize him. A clergyman present, however, declared him to be a Carew, and this was admitted by the rat-catcher. Thereupon Mr. Pleydell, who happened to be there—Portmans and Pleydells still flourish exceedingly on the same soil—expressed his pleasure at meeting Carew at last; he had heard so much of him but had never seen him before. "What!" exclaimed Carew, "do you not remember the poor wretch, with no shirt to his back nor stockings to his feet, who had been cast away on the French coast, and the rest of the crew drowned, to whom you gave a guinea and a suit of clothes?" "Yes, I do remember that poor object," was the reply. And then, to the amazement of those present, Carew avowed himself the sailor. Thereupon Mr. Pleydell and Mr. Seymer of Hanford (his descendants are still to be found there) laid him a guinea apiece they would know him again; and Carew took the bets eagerly. And the very next day an old woman with a frill and high hat, and hooped petticoats, and two children holding on to them while a third lay in her arms, came to Mr. Pleydell's with a terrible tale of the dreadful fire which had just happened at Kirton, hard by, and of the total loss of all she owned. As she was loitering

about in the yard, Mr. Pleydell and several friends came in from shooting, and one of them asking where she hailed from was told "From Kirton, your honor;" and thereupon she began again her tale of woe. "D—n you!" said a worthy magistrate, "there's been more money collected for Kirton than ever Kirton was worth!" but he gave her a shilling, and Mr. Pleydell gave her half a crown, Mr. Seymer another, and so on. Then, as they were going into the house, a loud "Hi, tantivy-tantivy!" from the snuffling old woman first amazed and then vastly amused them; for, after all, Carew had won his bets.

It seems to me that Carew must have obtained a certain measure of artistic enjoyment from these endless tricks. He was a mummer as well as a "mumper." He showed again and again that he took an especial pleasure in performing deft and daring tricks, and simply because they were just that. He was particularly fond of getting a donation twice or even three times in one day from the same philanthropist—not a mean performance for either side! Thus, in the morning he would be an unfortunate blacksmith, and in the afternoon a disabled sailor; or an old granny with five orphans depending on her at one time, and a one-legged cripple at another. He was Presbyterian, Quaker, Baptist, Roman Catholic and sound English Churchman, according to the profession of his prey. The Duke of Bolton, the Bouveries, Northcotes, Aclands, Dykes, Arundells, and his cousins the Coplestones, Courtenays and Cliffords—all unconsciously paid toll to him again and again, always in a new guise and in response to a new tale. Whenever he happened to be discovered he was almost invariably treated with the utmost good-humor and friendliness. His fame had gone abroad and people knew well that he was no ordinary scamp.

A remarkable story in connection with Carew is told of the Lord Weymouth of that day—the Marquisate of Bath was not created till later. Carew was playing at the time the part of a shipwrecked sailor, and he fell in with another mendicant in like guise, "begging away for God's sake," and telling an equally piteous tale. As they approached Warminster, Longleat, Lord Weymouth's magnificent place in Wiltshire, with its promise of rich spoil, could not fail to attract them. They were at first very badly received, and the servants told them that Lord Weymouth, having travelled abroad, could detect any false tales about foreign parts; and that if he did so he would horsewhip them to the edge of his property, as was his happy wont with those he proved to be imposters. However, Carew felt quite safe as regards Newfoundland and certain parts of the Continent, and he and his companion continued to beg piteously. At last the housekeeper relented, gave them a shilling, some bread and beer, and nearly the whole of a cold leg of mutton. On their way from the house the two beggars quarrelled as to who should carry the mutton, Carew wanting to throw it away there and then, while his companion wished to exchange it for drink at the nearest inn. This they eventually did, and after a long carouse they parted; but very shortly afterwards Carew was overtaken by two horsemen sent by Lord Weymouth to bring back the sailors who had called at Longleat. When ushered into the great man's presence, Carew was treated very roughly and promised a sojourn in jail and a flogging to boot. He was then removed to await the capture of his comrade, and soon that ragged gentleman entered the room where Carew was confined. They had just time for a hurried consultation together before they were again separated, and Carew was once more brought before the

Lord of Longleat, who thereupon, to the unbounded astonishment of the prisoner, disclosed the extraordinary fact that his ragged shipwrecked comrade was none other than himself! Lord Weymouth's quick changes and stratagems had been made possible by his valet being in his confidence, and it seems that he was in the habit of thus playing the vagabond, partly to relieve a natural *ennui* and partly to learn what was really going on in the neighborhood of his vast estates. I should add that he insisted on Carew staying with him at Longleat for some time, for he not only knew him well by repute as the prince of beggars, but was also acquainted with several members of his family. And thus he atoned for his very practical joke.

It was about this time that the old "king" of the gypsies died, and that Carew, on the strength of his innumerable exploits and the fame he had obtained through them, was elected to be "king" in his stead. Strictly speaking, this position placed him above the necessity for providing his own sustenance, the custom being for the "king" to be supported by the joint contributions of his subjects—sons of St. Peter as they were called, whose every finger was a predatory fish-hook! But Carew's nature was too mercurial for this and he was soon as busy as ever on the road. Yet, had he but known it, he was hastening on to disaster; for shortly afterwards he was arrested by the order of a magistrate bitterly opposed to him and the gypsies in general, and eventually convicted and sent to Maryland, in America, there to be sold into slavery for seven years. I cannot now follow him in his extraordinary adventures there, nor tell of his many hair-breadth escapes, nor of his flight into the woods with a huge iron collar round his neck—subsequently filed off by Indians—but I may just refer in passing to one or two facts which show

that the America of Carew's day was strangely unlike that of even fifty years later. Thus, at Philadelphia (the incorrigible scamp was a Quaker there, by the way) we hear that all the houses had large gardens and orchards attached to them, and that there were two fairs in the year and two market-days in the week. In New York he found about 7,000 inhabitants, most of them Dutch; but he was chiefly struck by the hundreds of negroes he saw hanging on as many gallows all round the town. At Boston, that self-righteous Pharisee of a town, the pavement of the street was held to be so immaculate that "to gallop a horse on it is three shillings and fourpence forfeit." It is of further interest to hear for what wages he shipped for "the run home;" the captain agreed to give him 15*l.* in sterling, fifteen gallons of rum, ten pounds of sugar and tobacco and ten pipes. This was the market price of the period.

The news of his return to England was received at first as incredible, but he very soon proved himself to be the real and only genuine Carew, and, strange to say, he was welcomed by every one with almost a royal hospitality. Although he had been sentenced to seven years of slavery, he had actually returned home before the ship on which he had been taken out! That was a great achievement in times when the law was hard and evasion of it popular.

And so the old life was renewed—the wandering up and down the deep lanes of the West Country and across its open heaths, sleeping in the dells and combs and coppices, and feasting, as perhaps only a Devonshire man could, on the fruit of the countless orchards. I do not doubt that in many a town he "stood," as the gypsies say—that is, with a placard on his chest proclaiming him blind, dumb, or what not; that when hunger pressed he did not hesitate

to "ramp beaker-kens" (rob poultry-houses); or when the exigencies of the many parts he played required it, to become a "prig-lully" and steal a shirt that fluttered clean upon a clothes-line. Many a pheasant paid tax to the Gypsy King with its life, and cunning snares brought many a rabbit and hare to his camp-fire at night. By "dukking," or telling fortunes, he often loaded pockets unpleasantly light, and by some audacious "bammer," or fairy tale, he extracted large-handed charity from the generous, impulsive landowners of the West. Yet kind he was to the really poor, and by his gypsy oath bound to share his spoil with those whose life like his was on the road. Often, too, like Robin Hood of old, he visited a summary vengeance on those whose hearts were turned against the poor. Though from one point of view an Ishmaelite indeed, he would have been no true gypsy had he not been brother, friend and comrade of the unfortunate.

One more story and I have done with this remarkable man. As it tells of a trick played upon him, it will partly compensate for those of the many tricks he had played upon others. In the days of which I write Bridgewater Fair was a very great junketing indeed, and attracted crowds of plump-pursed visitors from all parts of the West. As a natural consequence, there the vultures gathered together; and Carrew, limping painfully along on crutches, entered Bridgewater on the eve of the fair one year with a dozen companions, some of whom were blind, some deaf and some lame. Now the Mayor of Bridgewater was no friend of the gypsies, and as soon as he heard that this motley group of cripples had arrived he announced to some of his friends that he was possessed of a power they perhaps little suspected—that, in fact, he could make the blind see, the deaf hear and the lame walk. Bets were freely made that he could

do nothing of the kind, and thereupon the Mayor had the gypsies arrested and immediately brought before him. Of a truth they were a sorry lot. Those who were not deaf were blind; those who were not blind were deprived of a leg or so crippled as to be wholly dependent on crutches. The Mayor, after hearing their harrowing tales, ordered them to be confined for the night in the lock-up—a windowless one-roomed building, such as may still be seen in old-fashioned towns in the West. Thus they were locked in, with nothing but the brick floor for repose and the liveliest anticipations of the morrow for comfort.

About ten o'clock at night, however, the municipal surgeon entered with a lantern and announced that he would examine them all in the morning in order to report to the Mayor whether or not they really suffered from deformity of one kind or another; and he went on to say that those who were found to be imposters would be treated by the Mayor with severity so extreme that, moved to pity, he would allow any such misguided wretch to escape there and then from the lock-up on condition that he immediately left the town. At this intelligence a great commotion arose, and in less time than it takes to write it, the whole crowd surged out of the lock-up, flinging away their crutches and wooden legs, patches and bandages, and made off down the town at topmost speed—the blind leading the way with unerring steps, the dumb crying aloud their fears, the deaf replying to them, and the lame sprinting along at a rattling pace. Now, just opposite the lock-up, on the further side of the street, stood the witty Mayor and his friends, convulsed with laughter at the success of his scheme; and, to make the fun the greater, they chased the unfortunate beggars along the street, threatening loudly the awful fate which would befall any one who might



be caught. So the flight became also a race; and not until the last of the cripples had crossed over the bridge—one of them actually throwing himself into the river and swimming across—did the pursuit cease, and the Mayor begin to collect his bets.

Of Carew's other adventures I cannot now speak—not even of his curious experiences with Prince Charlie's army as it marched to Derby in 1745. But it may please some to know that very shortly after this Carew finally returned to his old home, and settled down to the life of a country gentleman. Whether he had been induced to do this by huge winnings in a lottery,

as some say, or by a fortune left him by a relative who had again and again offered him an independence during his career, or from a wish to give his daughter her proper station in life, the simple fact remains that he became regenerate after nearly forty years of vagabondage, and lived in prosperity and public esteem for a number of years. Moreover, his daughter married well, and her descendants apparently suffered nothing for the vagaries of that amazing scamp, their forerunner. So I am bound to acknowledge that there does not seem to be any sort of moral to the story of Bampfylde Moore Carew.

*The Cornhill Magazine.*

*Arthur Montefiore Brice.*

---

#### IF YOU BUT KNEW.

Ah, if you knew how soon and late  
My eyes long for a sight of you,  
Sometimes in passing by my gate  
You'd linger until fall of dew,  
If you but knew!

Ah, if you knew how sick and sore  
My life flags for the want of you,  
Straightway you'd enter at the door  
And clasp my hand between your two,  
If you but knew!

Ah, if you knew how lost and lone  
I watch and weep and wait for you,  
You'd press my heart close to your own  
Till love had healed me through and through,  
If you but knew!

*Mathilde Blind.*

**"WITHOUT ARE DOGS."**

The shadows fell over the hills, and the light mists that stole up from the valleys were touched by the rays of the rising moon; the long country lanes were silent and deserted, the last laborer had gone home from his work, and it was not yet time for the poachers to be astir; the hooting of the owl and the bleating of the sheep in a wayside field were the only signs of life, and not even a solitary cottage window gleamed out its token of human neighborhood.

But suddenly, through the stillness, rang out a startling sound, or, rather, a sound familiar and even consolatory, but one which at that hour in that lonely spot, could not fail to rouse a thrill of amazement—the sound of a church bell.

Clang! Clang! No church was visible, and yet the bell rose in full and regular cadence upon the night breeze, and a passing traveller might have been forgiven if his fell of hair had roused and stirred as life were in it.

That any worshippers should have been attracted by the mysterious summons might have seemed an impossibility, but as the bell rang on, a figure crept slowly out of the shelter of a neighboring coppice and listened with eager ear and parted lips.

It was the figure of a woman, poor of dress and haggard of face, a figure that brought a shadow of human misery into the dreaming beauty of the night. Slowly and painfully she made her way down the lane, walking with a footsore halt which showed that she had been long on the tramp, while the night air bore the sound over field and hedgerow in ebbing and rising waves of sound, but as she passed out from beneath the over-hanging trees, the country lay before her, a mass of light

intersected by the dark lines of the hedges, and she paused to take a survey.

A pool of water here and there gleamed with a crystal flash in the rays of the moon, but from amidst a sombre group of trees huddled together at the foot of the hill a redder light shone out, not so pure and clear but with more of human warmth about it, and turning her eyes thankfully from the cold splendors of the moon, she began to descend the slope.

There could be no doubt that the light and the bell had a common origin, for with each step the sound increased, and as she entered the shadowy thicket the outlines of a building rose before her; a church—that was evident at once, even without the summoning bell, for her feet were stumbling over fallen gravestones, and the light from within glimmered through wide mullioned windows. And yet it was not a church in the ordinary sense of the word; no entering congregation could ascend those crumbling steps, or pass through that barred and rusted door; the ruined porch, the roofless aisle, the shattered glass, all told of desertion and decay; then why should the bell peal out at this strange hour? It was not the first time that the unfortunate wanderer had seen the church, but such a mystery as this excited her curiosity, and cautiously groping her way over the grass she climbed upon one of the fallen stones and looked in through the broken window.

The ivy had covered the gaping rafters and crept down the wall of the church till it found a support in the mouldering pews, twining itself over them in a living mantle of green; the grass had forced itself up through the

tilled floor, and delicate ferns nestled in the dark dampness of the aisles. No human being was visible, but seven candles were burning in different parts of the building, casting a flickering, uncertain light on wall and arch.

The woman drew her breath quickly as she gazed; there was something so strange, so unearthly in the scene, that she dreaded to think what might next be presented to her view; a congregation of spirit worshippers must surely be about to enter this death-like church, and in another moment she should see them appear in ghostly procession, chanting sad requiems as they came.

The bell ceased even as the thought passed through her mind, and she hardly restrained a cry of terror as a step was heard upon the echoing flags and a white figure came into sight advancing slowly towards the chancel. But the cry remained unuttered, and the figure passed on unconscious, while the woman gazed after it, her terror changing into awe. The bright curling hair, the lustrous eyes, the white-robed form, reminded her of pictures of angels dimly remembered from her childhood's days, and she wondered whether this was not some spirit sent down to watch over the ruined church now that its human guardians had deserted it.

A book was in the strange priest's hands, and as he reached the chancel step he opened it and turned to face an imaginary congregation.

"And they said to the mountains and rocks, Fall on us and hide us from the face of Him that sitteth on the throne and from the wrath of the Lamb: for the great day of His wrath is come, and who shall be able to stand?"

The terrible words rolled along the dim aisles, and echoed back again as with a chorus of assent from unseen listeners; the woman shuddered and clung more painfully to the crumbling window-ledge; it was her own doom

that was being pronounced, she could not doubt it, and the blood in her veins turned cold. A moment's silence followed and then the voice began again—

"For without are dogs, and sorcerers and idolaters, and whosoever loveth and maketh a lie. Woe, woe, woe to the inhabitants of the earth, for they repented not of their murders, nor of their sorceries, nor of their idolatries, nor of their thefts."

He closed the book as he finished, and stepping forward with upraised hand seemed to fall down from heaven the curse that he had just pronounced; the woman's face grew paler as he approached, and her wild eyes fiercer; she knew that the angel was about to affix his woe upon her guilty forehead, and slipping down from her perilous position she fell heavily to the ground.

When she came to herself once more the scene had changed. The ruined church was still beside her, the mouldering gravestones were still beneath her aching frame, but the awful glamour had died away from earth and sky, and the objects around her showed dim and wan as a midnight sorrow encountered in the dawning light of day. Her thin dress was wet with the dew, her damp hair clung about her face, her weary eyes looked out lifelessly above the white hollows of her cheeks. At first she scarcely remembered the terror that had caused her to swoon; fatigue and hunger had often exhausted her before, and it was no surprise to her that they should have done so again; but as she raised herself stiffly upon her elbows and looked at the loose gray stones that she had brought down in her fall, a sudden tremor passed over her and she got up hastily.

Once on her feet, however, she recalled her presence of mind; facts, not fancies, were what she had to deal with; stern, cold facts that pressed relentlessly upon her spirit like thorns

upon shuddering flesh. It was early yet, she knew; her country lore came back to her with the sight and scent of the fields, and leaving the church behind her without venturing a backward look, she sat down by the side of the pool that she might wash away the stains of her travel.

Slowly the light strengthened, the gray brightened into saffron, the saffron glowed into pink, but no answering joy flashed through the livid hues of her face; returning day is the universal symbol of returning hope and happiness, but to those whose deeds are deeds of darkness, light is the sign of discovery and judgment. The sense of forgotten things which had been dimly awakened in her on the preceding night was retouched with a quivering pain as distant sounds began to fall upon her ear. The crowing of the farmyard cock made her think, not of that cheerful domestic bird leading out his family to seek their morning meal, but of those words of dark and solemn import—"Before the cock crow twice, thou shalt deny Me thrice!" She thought thereon, but, unlike Peter, she could not weep: for her the blessedness of tears was withheld, and as the barking of a shepherd's collie rang out through the morning mist, the voice of the ghostly minister rang out once more in her ears, "For without are dogs."

She sprang up from her seat with a sob that was born not of sorrow, but of despair, and began pacing up and down by the side of the water until the chill aloofness of the dawn had passed away and the commonplace aspect of everyday life had returned once more to the world. The rumble of a cart upon the road did more to restore her disordered nerves than any utterance of sympathy could have done; and when a herd of cows passed through the meadows before her on their way to the milking sheds, she put on her

bonnet with steady hands and moved away with a look of purpose on her face.

An hour later, she stood at the garden gate of a cottage which was set like a glowing picture against the green background of lane and wood. The sweet September air had a touch of crispness in it, and a yellow leaf or two displayed their warning presage through the summer glory of the trees; a few late blooms hung upon the rose-bushes, stocks and jessamine still scented the air, and sweet-williams and larkspurs raised their morning faces to the sky. But the bright purity of the scene jarred upon the wanderer; a joy from which we are debarred by our low nature appears to us not as a delight but as a reproach, and a spasm of pain crossed her face as she unlatched the gate and went up to knock at the door where she had once had the right to go in and out at will.

The pause which followed was long enough to damp her highpitched courage, but at length the door opened and the figure of a middle-aged woman appeared, in spotless apron and neat black cap, who instantly closed it again with the brief remark, "I can't give you nothin'."

Brief as the utterance was, however, the answer was briefer still; one word only, and yet it pierced through bolt and bar: "Mother!"

There was a ground tone of agony in the voice against which the heart that heard it was not proof; but when the door was again opened, and mother and child stood face to face, the mild peevishness of the elder woman's expression deepened, and she gazed at the returning wanderer uneasily.

"Well, come in, 'Liza," she said at last; "your father ain't at home."

"Do you think I don't know that!" said Liza; "I've been watching the door this last half hour and more. Let me

sit down, mother; I'm pretty nigh starved."

Her pride would fain have kept back the confession, but physical weakness had robbed her of her self-control, and sinking into a chair she hid her face in her hands. A mist dimmed the mother's eyes for a moment and she bent forward as though to remove the bonnet with tender fingers, then turning suddenly away she went to the kitchen in search of food.

"Here's a cup of tea," she said as she returned, "drink it while it's hot, and I'll cut you some bread and butter."

Her manner was kindly but there was no cordiality in it, and 'Liza ate and drank with a sense of repulsion that grew stronger with each glance at the silent figure in the opposite chair.

"I see you've got my sampler hanging up still," she said, as she pushed her cup impatiently away; "and if here isn't the prize book I got when I left school!" She pulled it towards her as she spoke and read in a sarcastic voice: "'Awarded to Eliza Miller for good conduct, by the Vicar and Schoolmaster of Selsdon.' I thought you'd have burnt them long ago," she added, after a moment's pause.

"No, we ain't never burnt 'em," said Mrs. Miller with a slight kindling of eagerness in her dull tone. "Your father loved you, 'Liza, I always told you he loved you, and he says to me, 'Let her sampler hang there like as it allus did,' and we've never moved it from that day to this."

She looked pleadingly at her daughter, but 'Liza shrugged her shoulders. "Ah!" she said, "but it wasn't me he loved, 'twas my good conduct!"

This distinction was too subtle for Mrs. Miller, however, and when she spoke again it was in the helpless tone that her daughter remembered of old.

"We've allus been respectable," she said, "and we've prided ourselves on it! It wasn't no wonder that your

father got angry when people flung things in his teeth."

'Liza did not answer, but her thin face flushed and her chest heaved painfully, and the sight struck upon the maternal feeling that lay buried in the elder woman's breast.

"You do look bad!" she said uneasily. "Where have you been to, and what have you been a doin' of? You'd a wrote, I know, if it had been anything good."

Without the last words her inquiry might have drawn out 'Liza's confidence, but as it was it galled her sore nerves into fury.

"I've been in prison if you want to know!" she said, flashing her black eyes on her shrinking mother. "I'm a gaol-bird, I am, and I'm plenty of other things too, p'raps you'd like a list of 'em?"

"No, no, don't tell me," said Mrs. Miller with a moan; "such things are ill hearin'. But what makes you look so bad?"

"The things as you're too respectable to hear," said 'Liza drily. "You'd know what it was if you draggled through the streets on a wet night with the wind whistling through your bones, and never a bite nor a sup inside you. I'm just about gone to pieces, and that's what brought me home."

There was a wistful yearning in her voice that her mother was too obtuse to perceive.

"Yes, that's the way with them all," she said irritably. "Off for their own pleasure and back again when it's done, with an 'open the door and let me in!' I don't know what to do with you, I'm sure."

A gasp of anguish broke from the burdened heart, but it was quickly stifled again.

"You needn't do nothing," said 'Liza, getting up from her chair with a well-feigned look of indifference. "I thought I'd like to have a sight of you again,



but I'm off now. Don't trouble about me, we all get our deserts. Jael used to tell me that."

"Ah! Jael's a bad un herself now," said Mrs. Miller with sudden heat. "What call had she to witch our pig, I should like to know? But your father'll pay her out: he was never one to let a thing pass; and talking of that 'Liza, I don't know what he'll say if he finds you here."

"I'll go, then," said 'Liza. "You can take the sampler down; it's not true any more."

"Not true?" said Mrs. Miller, as she fixed her puzzled eyes on the sampler; but 'Liza had passed the garden-gate before her mother had finished reading the legend in its gay-colored silks:—

Eliza Miller is my name,  
A scholar is my station,  
Selsdon village is my home,  
England is my nation.

She glanced at it again from time to time as the September day wore slowly through, until at last she almost persuaded herself that she had fallen a prey to sleep and dreamed a dream in the midst of her morning's labors. And yet, all through those long shining hours, a wretched figure lay in the neighboring coppice, too weary for complaints, too weak for tears.

Not while day lasted did 'Liza dare to move, for she would not risk meeting anyone else who knew her, and it was not till darkness had once more wrapped the earth in its mantle of mercy that she dragged herself to her feet. Never again would she enter Selsdon village; she would return to her old haunts and her old companions, and let the waves of sin close over her head.

Such was her intention, but she had miscalculated her strength; the strain that she had passed through had been too great, and she had only gone a few yards when her limbs failed under

her and she sank down helplessly by the side of the road. Desperately now she longed for some passer-by, no matter who; if she could only hear a human voice she would not care, even though the words it uttered were words of scorn. But her thoughts were interrupted with a sudden cry of terror. The road on which she lay was the one which led to the ruined church, and there, bearing down upon her in the moonlight, was the tall white figure that had presaged her approaching doom. Straight towards her it came, and as the glowing eyes met her own a cloud enveloped her senses and she knew no more.

How long her swoon lasted she could not tell, but when her consciousness began to return she found herself confronted by a fierce red glare, crossed by black bars. It had come then, the messenger had carried her to the appointed place, and a shudder shook her from head to foot. But with the shudder a voice fell upon her ears, a voice stern and yet tender, that had in it a shadow of some bygone memory.

"She's comin' to; hand me the water, Jonah!"

Her brain cleared a little as the cold drops splashed upon her forehead, and she looked up with a glance of recognition at the face bent over her.

"Jael!" she exclaimed.

All her life long, as far back as she could remember, she had feared Jael Durlock, the strong-featured, hard-hearted widow, who rejoiced in the vengeance of her Biblical namesake, and declared herself ready to imitate it on any unfortunate wanderer from the paths of righteousness. It was into her hands, then, that she had fallen! Who had been cruel enough to bring her within reach of that most unmerciful of judges?

"Let me go!" she cried wildly, as she tried to raise herself on her elbow, but the hand that replaced her on her pillow

low was strangely gentle, and the voice that answered her was full of kindness.

"Lie still, my poor lamb! you're not above half alive yet; if Jonah hadn't found you when he did, there'd have been small hope for you this night."

It was Jonah, then, who had brought her home; Jonah, whom she remembered as a shambling, weak-minded boy. Why should he haunt the ruined church in such strange guise? But the question was too hard for her, and as she pondered over it she fell asleep.

When she awoke again the sun was shining through the latticed window, and she looked about with reviving interest. She was lying on the sofa in Jael's single living room, and opposite to her was the picture at which she had often trembled in her childhood: the wife of Heber the Kenite, with a cruel light in her eyes, and in her hand a workman's hammer, which she poised above the head of the sleeping Sisera!

"Why did you take me in?" she said, turning toward the figure by the hearth; "my own mother would have nothing to do with me; and if you knew all, you wouldn't lift a finger to help me."

There was no answer, and as 'Liza watched the rugged face she saw a strange expression pass across it.

"Is it true what my mother said," she whispered, "that you are bad yourself now?"

A momentary flash of anger brought back the old look that 'Liza remembered so well, but it faded again, and the lines about the mouth softened.

"There's a many say that," said Jael, "but they don't understand; how should they, seein' as I never tell 'em?"

"Tell me!" said 'Liza, and there was something in her wasted face that urged the request more powerfully than any words.

"It's all Jonah's doin'," said Jael, tenderly, "my poor boy as I used to

beat when he was a little un, thinkin' I could whip the sense into him! He fell ill a year or two back, and in his fever he wouldn't let no one touch him but me, and he kept on a talkin' to God till it fair broke your heart to hear him. And when he got well he was all for bein' a preacher, like the prophet Jonah was, and I couldn't bring myself to tell him as that would never be. He got me to make him a white gown like the parson's, and then nothin' would do but he must go and preach in the old church. I've been in mortal fear of the lads doin' him a harm, but they're too scared of the old graveyard to go there o' nights, and I can't bear to thwart him. But what with his bein' so strange and my keepin' to myself for fear of talk about his ways, it's said that there's black work in it, and some folks think that I've got the evil eye."

"But what makes Jonah so set on preaching?" asked 'Liza, ignoring the last words.

"He says he's got a message," said Jael, with a pathetic stirring of motherly pride. "'A message!' that's all his talk; and when I ask who he thinks will hear his message out there among the bats and owls, he says as sharp as anything. 'If God sends me a message, can't He send someone to hear it?'"

"Did Jonah say that?" said 'Liza, a look of awe stealing over her white face. "Well, he's right; God sent me!"

"But Jonah found you in the road," said Jael in some perplexity.

"Yes, but the night before that I was at the church and I heard the words he said; they came on me like hailstones, and I saw my sin."

Her voice fell into a hoarse whisper, but the mother heard it and her heart leapt up; let the neighbors scoff as they chose, let them point out her faults and Jonah's deficiencies with ruthless candor—he had had his work to do, and he had done it.

"That's like me," she said softly; "I was as full o' pride as an egg is full o' meat; but when my boy was so lovin' to me after the way I'd treated him, I saw my sin, and I set myself to cast it out, and when you get well you'll do the same."

A gleam of hope dawned in the girl's face, but it quickly faded again.

"No," she said quietly, "there's no getting well for me. I don't mind that so much, but I'd like to have told father I'm sorry I grieved him. You must tell him when I'm dead, for it's no good asking him to come and see me."

"You won't die yet awhile," said Jael in encouraging tones as she brought the broth that she had been warming, but her words belied her thoughts, and instead of going to bed that night she sat beside her patient and listened to the labored breathing.

"No, Jonah, you mustn't go out," she said as the lad's nightly fit of restlessness began; "I may want you to go to the town for the doctor."

But though Jonah obeyed her he would not be debarred from putting on his surplice, and stood, tall and statue-like, amid the dim lights and shadows of the little room. The sight recalled

'Liza's failing powers and she beckoned to him feverishly.

"I heard it," she said, "and I know it's true: 'Without are dogs!' That's what I am, but oh! Jonah, isn't there a word of hope for the dogs?"

She gazed up into the half-witted lad's face with an intensity of yearning great as that of a penitent before a saintly father-confessor; no time now to fetch priest or theologian, the light of life is fading quickly, and already the shadow of a great darkness lies upon her face; if Jonah has no message for her, she must go out into the night with wailing and gnashing of teeth!

But Jonah did not fall in the supreme moment. His mind was the mind of a babe, his memory the memory of a parrot; but who shall deny the inspiration which guided him, by the word he caught, to the message he needed?

"A word of hope for the dogs!" murmured the dying girl again; and looking up with a sudden glow upon his face, Jonah spread his arms heavenward and cried in full, clear tones, "'Yea, Lord, for the dogs eat of the crumbs that fall from the children's table!'"

*Mary Bradford-Whiting.*

*The Gentleman's Magazine.*

### A WOMAN TO A MAN.

When you grieve, and let it show,  
And may tell me nothing more,  
You have told me, o'er and o'er,  
All a woman needs to know.

When I show you that I care  
(Meet your eyes and touch your hand,)  
I have made you understand  
All a woman may, or dare.

So, the ears of Friendship heard!  
So, 'twas seen of Friendship's eyes!  
You are sad, I sympathize,  
All without a single word.

*Westminster Gazette.*

MADAME GEOFFRIN.

One of the intimates of Madame Geoffrin remarks one day in her Salon that everything is perfect *chez elle* except the cream.

"What will you?" says Madame. "I cannot change my milk-woman."

"Why not?"

"Because I have given her two cows."

"Volla," says a biographer, "le rare et le délicat."

The incident is, indeed, quite characteristic of the woman whose motto is "Donner et pardonner," who has a tact that is almost genius, and a heart so kind and tender, honest and generous, that there is not one of the *salonières* upon whose memory it is pleasanter to linger.

Marie Thérèse Rodet is born at Paris in 1699. She is, says one authority, the daughter of a *valet de chambre* of the Dauphine; while another has it that the valet is of Dauphigny. Everybody is agreed that her origin is entirely obscure and *bourgeoise*. Her parents die when she is in her cradle. She is brought up, but not educated, by a shrewd and illiterate old grandmother, who has a theory that if a woman is a fool learning will only accentuate her folly, and that if she is clever she will do well enough without it. There is something to be said for this idea.

At fifteen Marie marries M. Geoffrin, who is also *bourgeois*, enormously wealthy, and a lieutenant-colonel of the National Guard. They have a daughter, afterwards the Marquise de la Ferté-Imbault. M. Geoffrin dies. With the exception of one famous visit to the King of Poland at Warsaw, Madame never leaves Paris, even for a day. She holds there the Salon which has made her famous, and dies there full of years and honor in 1777.

This greatest of all the *salonières* has, therefore, no history. That is, if outward events make a history. But there are some people who could write the incidents of their life on a thumb-nail, and who yet have known great emotions, exercised wide influence and left behind them a more lasting reputation than many kings and dynasties. Perhaps Madame Geoffrin is one of these.

There are so few records of the early part of her life that what she is in her brief girlhood is mostly a matter of conjecture. She does not seem to wish to learn any more than the clever old grandmother wishes to teach. She has no masters. She never even knows how to spell. But she is made to read—and to read much—and what is better than all the reading in the world, to think. She is very little instructed in facts, and a great deal in principles; versed in no science but the science of human nature; shown how to look at things simply as they are; and certainly not left in the arid condition of the *pédante* who, having stuffed her head full of information, leaves quite uncultivated her heart, her tact, her sympathy, and that deeper wisdom which is not of books. The little Marie, too, has always before her the example of the humorous and clear-minded old *bourgeoise*, who "talked so pleasantly of the things she did not know that no one ever wished she knew them better," and who at least, if results are to be trusted, showed the grandchild that noblest of the arts—how to live well.

Can't one fancy what a very bright, modest, sensible little girl this Marie is likely to be when at fifteen she marries her M. Geoffrin? The marriage seems to be the usual *mariage de convenance*, inevitable at that date. Monsieur is a dull, heavy, honest, ugly per-

son. There is one little story to the effect that in studying the *Encyclopædia*, printed in two columns, he reads straight across the page, and remarks afterwards that the book seems very fair, but a trifle obscure; and another little story to the effect that he will read the first volume of a history or book of travels, written in several volumes, over and over again, and then wonder that the author should so much repeat himself. The stories are not true, very likely. But if they are, one cannot but think that even this stupidity has, as it were, its own especial appeal to the wide, kindly heart of the girlish wife. It is only a very shallow cleverness that is annoyed at stupidity after all. It is your wise people who can afford to treat it very gently—seeing how little it is the wisest can know—and who would have a fellow-feeling for that worthy, silent old manufacturer of ices (this is M. Geoffrin's trade) at the head of the table trying vainly to catch the sense of the witty, elusive talk going on round him, and not a little thankful to get back to solitude, where he can be as unintellectual as he feels inclined, and practice comfortably on his *trompette marine* by the hour together.

There is no evidence to show that Madame does not treat Monsieur with at least as much sympathy and thoughtfulness as she treats all the world. He gives her great wealth, for which a woman who so loves to make others happy can't but be grateful. Her beautiful rooms are full of perfect statuary and pictures. She is enabled and already beginning to entertain her friends. This little *bourgeoise*, with her fine talent for order and decorum, must needs regulate her husband's home well and happily. Though he is a non-entity, a respectable old figure-head to her guests, it does not follow he is nothing more to her. The stranger who inquires presently what has be-

come of the old man who used to be at Madame's dinners, and is now there no more, and is met by the reply, "C'était mon mari; il est mort," represents the attitude towards M. Geoffrin of some of Madame's friends, but not that of Madame herself.

It is said that she receives what may be called her training for her Salon from the clever and corrupt Madame de Tencin. That may be. No training however brilliant, could fit a woman unfitted in heart and character to be, not merely the hostess, but the friend, confidante, mother as it were, of the most brilliant genius of the eighteenth century.

The Salon of Madame Geoffrin is one of the wonders of the social world. She has no position. She can claim as father a *valet de chambre* in an age when the aristocracy won't touch the *canaille* with the tips of their white fingers. She is wealthy, indeed, but in a time when all the *noblesse* are also wealthy (with their rich places and perquisites and blood-money from the taxes), so that there is not then, as now, an acknowledged aristocracy of bullion. Her *trompette marine*, with his fortune made in trade, is no great help to her. She is not beautiful. She has little, gentle, old-maidish ways that never even let her seem young. She is respectable when decorum of manners is highly unpopular, and taken to be a tacit reproach, in the very worst taste, upon modish levity. She is, as has been seen, uneducated.

And to her rooms soon flock *savants*, philosophers, artists, nobles, princes, ambassadors, politicians, reformers. On Monday one dines here—the perfection of a little dinner, simple, suitable, well-chosen—the guests mostly painters and sculptors. What does Madame know about art? Nothing, except what a refined natural taste can teach her. On Wednesdays the dinner is literary—Marmontel, Holbach, D'Alembert, Glib-



bon, Hume, Horace Walpole, and, the only woman besides the hostess, Mademoiselle de Lespinasse. Can't one hear the conversation? Madame Geoffrin has the supreme art of making other people talk their best. She knows just where to put in a word or to ask a question. She has in perfection that finer accomplishment—how to listen. She might very well know more about books than she does. But it is impossible that she should sympathize better with the makers of books, their hopes, cares, fears, ambition. These men tell her their difficulties. She advises them, helps them, cheers them. She is their good angel—quite a human good angel, with that prim exactness about her dress, lavender-scented, dainty, quiet, with her spotless muslins about her neck, the little cap tied under her chin—the very soul of gentle good sense, gay, kind, wise, natural, orderly.

After the dinners she receives all her world. What an assembly it is! This Salon is at once the most catholic and the most particular of all the Salons. Here, it is said, sovereigns meet their people. The aristocracy of genius is brought close to the aristocracy of birth. Is one clever, poor, obscure—or titled and famous? The two meet on common ground and are both the better. Here are Montesquieu, Voltaire, Diderot, Algarotti and Lord Shelburne. Stanislas Augustus, afterwards King of Poland, is a "host" of the company, and brings in his train the Polish nobles and notabilities of the day. Here D'Alembert meets often his fatal passion, Mademoiselle de Lespinasse. Here is Grimm, who has come straight from another and very different Salon and influence—that of his mistress, Madame d'Epinau. Horace Walpole, perhaps, has been at Madame du Defand's.

In this corner one is complimenting Bernardin de Saint-Pierre on his "Paul

et Virginie," "that swan song of old dying France." In another there is a group of laughing girls—for Madame loves such, as they love her. Women of fashion talk with the rugged old *bourgeois* reformers, who first of all should reform *their* class and character. The broken French of those "foreigners of distinction," who never pass through Paris without visiting Madame Geoffrin, is audible everywhere. Vanloo and Vernet are looking at the priceless pictures and statuary—bought out of the *trompette's* ice-money. And over all, the genius of good taste, good order, good sense, presides that woman who is well called the "invisible Providence" of her assemblies, Madame Geoffrin.

Though she must be very young when she first begins to receive a society more illustrious than any since the days of Madame de Rambouillet, she has from the very first the quiet sageness of middle life, and that aversion to change, hastiness and discord which one does not associate with youth. Are they talking politics? Madame knows nothing of politics. They make people bitter, argumentative, quarrelsome. She listens a little while; then when the discussion grows too heated, interposes with her "Voilà qui est bien." That is her oil on troubled waters, her password to harmony, fairness and reason. In her rooms there is always a calm—though it be but the calm before the storm. The distant rumble of the thunder of that tempest that is soon to burst over France is not heard in this quiet place. By Madame's fireside, indeed, and under Madame's peaceful influence, one whispers of those doctrines which will presently *bouleverser* the world. But it is the writers, not the actors, of that great drama who gather here, and when they get too fiery and hot-headed in their discussions, as some needs must, they drift away naturally from

the gathering of Madame Geoffrin to the greater liberty allowed by Holbach and Helvétius.

Madame has a little supper-party for a few chosen intimates when her world has gone away. She does not even now talk much herself—only interposes now and then with a gay little story or a kind little axiom. All her sayings are kind, it seems. It is not so difficult to be witty if one is permitted to be a little bitter too. But to be witty and to see persistently the best side of people and motives is by no means so easy.

If Madame believed less in her friends she could not help them half so much. It is not hard to understand why these impulsive, brilliant Frenchmen come to this wise little *bourgeoise* with their confidences and confessions. She scolds them well—*à part*—when the supper is over; but she understands them perfectly, and has the charity that believeth and hopeth all things, and that makes the most fallen once more believe and hope in himself.

All her friends are not, of course, brilliant people. Is it Madame Geoffrin Shenstone is thinking of in particular when he writes of the Frenchwoman in general?—"There is a quality in which no woman in the world can compete with her—it is the power of intellectual irritation. She will draw wit out of a fool." There is a charming story told of Madame Geoffrin, who finds herself *tête-à-tête* for a whole long winter evening with a worthy and insufferable old bore of an abbé. What is to be done? Yawn in each other's faces? Die of *tristesse* and *ennui* under a mask of social smiles? Madame, "inspired by the desperate situation," sets herself to work to make the bore amusing; and succeeds so well that when he leaves her she gives him a little compliment on his "bonne conversation." "Madame," says he, "I am only the instru-

ment on which you have played beautifully."

This is the key at once to her character and to her social success. She "plays beautifully" the noble music of the great masters on instruments from which others only extract the vile jingle of street songs or the fierce passions of the "Marsellaise." She does not only draw cleverness from the stupid, but goodness from the corrupt. Instead of the license and indecency of the gatherings of Mademoiselle Quinault, there are her modest little suppers, where even Burigny, her dear major-domo, is not required to keep order, because she knows so well how to keep it herself. She still stands out, with her carefully regulated home and her serene mind, as the noblest high-priestess of decency and right. She still gives the lie to the delusion (which even now obtains in her country, if one can judge by its fiction and plays) that virtue *must* be stupid. If in reading of her, with that lack of events in her history and that gentle regularity in her daily life, she seems dull even for a moment, the fault lies only with her biographer and not with the woman who for fifty years is as a mother, beloved, worshipped, honored by the most brilliant spirits of her age.

It is in her own Salon that she first learns that affection, which she carries with her to her grave, for Stanislas Augustus Poniatowski, afterwards King of Poland. He appears to be an honest, well-intentioned person, not at all incapable of warm feelings, or at all adequate to the tremendous situation in which he finds himself. To Madame he is her "fils" and her "bien aimé." A prince? A king-elect? A king? What does that matter? He is first of all, as it were, her son. She has the gift of looking straight through the trappings of royalty, fame, position, at the man within them.

In 1764 the Cabinets of Petersburg

and Berlin set him on the Polish throne, and Madame writes to him as "Sire," and "Majesty," and regards him forever as the child who wants help and sympathy on a difficult way, with whom one may quarrel a little, but whom, feeble or strong, in or out of power, one must needs love to the end.

The letters the pair exchange are not remarkable as literary compositions. Madame's are full of the faults of orthography for which she is famous. They have very few of the blithe little anecdotes and epigrams which make her conversation delightful. She is writing to a man always in danger, fear and difficulty; and is herself the most sympathetic of women. So what would one have? They have no great political interest, or only that feminine view of politics which always centres on the politician. But they are not the less letters which even a king might have been glad to receive. If any one will look back on some cherished correspondence of his own, he will find in it, it may be pretty safely said, less wit and brilliancy even than Stanislas found in Madame Geoffrin's. It is only posterity which demands cleverness and comment on contemporary history in a letter; the receiver only needs the touch of the writer's hand, the assurance of affection and faithfulness, and the reminder that the only real separation is that which causes no pain.

Madame has been corresponding with her son and King only a few months when the idea of visiting him at Warsaw takes possession of her heart. She is now sixty-five years old. She has never been out of Paris in her life. She has preferred her "rue de la Harpe" to all the splendid places of the world. The difficulties of travelling in that time are hardly estimable. She has no one to go with her. Her daughter is married and has her own ties. Madame has to tear herself from a Salon of perhaps forty years'

standing. But the idea grows and then dominates her. She and her King have a quarrel on paper, and the scheme seems likely to be abandoned. They have a reconciliation, and their reunion is the necessary consequence. One has to be a woman, perhaps, and to understand that maternal yearning in every woman's heart, to realize the absorbing nature of the desire to see her "bien aimé" again which makes Madame Geoffrin pursue her plan against everybody's advice, and carry it out in the teeth of difficulty. Her "bien aimé" himself has been more than a little doubtful about his "chère maman" attempting a journey so hazardous. He has warned her often of the drawbacks she will find. He will do his best for her—she shall be infinitely honored and beloved—but drawbacks there will be; and she pays no attention to his cautions—or, rather, listens, and persists.

In the end of June, 1766, escorted by the Comte de Loyko, Chamberlain to Stanislas, Madame Geoffrin, *bourgeoise*, starts with an almost royal progress and with, it is said, the eyes of Europe upon her, on the first stage of her travels. Can't one see her looking out from the windows of that "berline," built for the occasion, upon the new world? A widely-travelled generation can hardly fancy the excitement and eagerness, doubt, fear, anticipation which such a journey must represent in the mind of a woman who belongs to the most stay-at-home people of a stay-at-home age. And behold this is Vienna! Not Paris, indeed, but not all contemptible. Madame parts here from Loyko, who is replaced by the Captain Bachone, who speaks all languages, and is prepared; it appears, to travel with suites of furniture, cooks, provisions, silver plate, to render Madame's journey as little inconvenient as may be. At Vienna, the greatest nobility of the land receive this clever, dignified daughter of the people with their very best parties and wel-

come. Maria Theresa shows her the finest kindness and sympathy. She sees all the Austrian Royal Family—"the prettiest thing one can imagine"—at Schoenbrunn. Here is the young Marie Antoinette, hardly twelve years old and already lovely as an angel. "The Archduchess told me to write to France and say I have seen her, this little one, and find her beautiful." Is this the first footstep of that grim destiny which is to overtake "the Austrian," falling on the threshold of her life? "Arrière-petite-fille du roi de France." "Lovely as an angel." "Write to your country and say you found her so." It would be but a part of the fitness of fate that one of the first little nails in the coffin of monarchy and of the Queen should be driven there by the daughter of a *valet de chambre*.

Madame would be sorry to leave Vienna, no doubt, if she could have room for such a feeling of sorrow in her heart when she is getting nearer every hour to this son of her age and her affection. She has expressed herself so warmly and decidedly in that quarrel they have had! She is so anxious to see him and tell him that she would not have been half so angry if she had loved him less. To her serene nature the omnipotence of fate or death to dash the cup of realization from one's lips, even at the last moment, is not so vivid as to a less sanguine temperament. She looks forward to their meeting with a sure heart. They are to be so happy, son and mother once more—a French son and mother, be it understood, between whom is that intimacy and confidence not half so well known to the relationship in other countries. He is to tell her what he has done, is doing, is going to do. They will talk over his marriage, his prospects, his thousand daily difficulties in that stormy kingdom, which needs the strongest man at its head, and has a

very amiable one. She will advise him, scold him, help him. She does not know much about his Polish politics, but she can learn. She is all for him and not at all for herself. She wants no advancement, no place for her friends, no influence used here or word spoken there—nothing but the good of one person—Stanislas Augustus Poniatowski.

No one who has lived long in the world will wonder that this meeting at Warsaw does not fulfil all it promised. It is a truism, but not less a truth, that the only unalloyed happiness of life is anticipation, and that the happiest people are those whose dreams are unrealized. These two, who love each other sincerely, disagree upon a thousand minor and immaterial points, as many other sincere lovers have done before and after them. They can't consent to differ. (Has one ever met a woman who could let a man think differently from her without dragging that difference to the fore, and discussing and threshing it out a hundred times a day?) Madame suffers not a little. Stanislas lodges her with splendor and honor. She obtains—if that is any advantage—a very good idea of the tottering state of this poor little kingdom, torn by internal dissension, the plaything of the greater Powers. She receives, during her stay in Poland, letters from Voltaire and Marmontel. Her whole visit there lasts only a little more than two months. When she is back again in Paris she is able to write of it with enthusiasm. But there are not the less those clouds on her happiness. When she has gone away Stanislas writes in terms of a passionate regret, and she answers him from Vienna that the "tu" in which he addresses her is an "illusion of Satan," and recalls "all that I have suffered." There have been, it is said, influences at work upon the King which Madame dreads for him, and of which she can't persuade him to rid

himself. They will love each other better when they are separated. It is from a distance that one obtains the best view of a city. Too near, one sees the defects of a part, and not the beauty of the whole.

The pair resume their correspondence with all their old fervor when Madame is back again in her Paris. She sympathizes once more with all Stanislas's difficulties and trials, which do not get fewer as the years go on. She is now as ever, the genius of common-sense and quiet reason—calm, far-seeing, judicious. Petty jealousies are quite forgotten in the very real and daily growing need Stanislas has of her faithful friendship. In 1769 she is able to write to him, "When one is young, one's pleasure, passions, tastes even, form attachments and break them. My feeling for you depends on none of these things; therefore it has lasted. It has lasted in spite of candor and plain speaking, and will last to the end of my life."

Madame is now seventy years old. Famine, financial disorder, and parties in the Court and Government, who sacrifice the public good to gratify private malice, make the condition of France appear deplorable, even to a woman whose nature is at all times gently optimistic. But the misfortunes of her own country are light beside those of her King's.

In 1772 takes place the first partition of Poland. By 1792, when the second partition breaks Poniatowski's heart, and he retires to Petersburg, to live there till his death in 1798, with, it is said, no consolation but that taste for letters he learnt of Madame Geoffrin, she has long gone the way of all flesh. She writes to him so long as she can handle a pen, loves him as long as she has a heart to love with; and in her last letter to him tells him that she cannot express her joy at leaving him happy and content. So that even Fate is sometimes merciful.

The close of Madame Geoffrin's life is like its beginning, well-ordered and regular. She continues to receive her friends in her Salon when she is a very old woman. In the summer of 1776 she is attacked by paralysis. The attack is brought on, say some, by too close an attendance at a Church festival. It may be. Though Madame has been the intimate of the philosophers, has listened many times in her rooms to the free expression of free-thought, and has been a warm patroness of the *Encyclopædia*, yet it is not a little in keeping with the tranquil conservatism of her character that orthodoxy should claim her at last. Her daughter, Madame la Marquise de la Ferté-Imbault, who is properly aristocratic and conventional, takes possession of her mother's bed, and won't let those adventurous souls, Morellet, D'Alembert, Marmontel, come near it. The sick woman is past troubling at their exclusion; or perhaps, like many others, after having in life reasoned and wondered, is glad to die in the bosom of that Church whose great attraction to the soul is that it admits no doubts, saying with that self-confidence which gives confidence, "Behold, I am the Truth! Rest in me." Madame at least only smiles when she learns that her daughter is thus "guarding her tomb from the infidels." It is thought that her reason is dimmed a little. But she is able to make her preparations for death "galement" almost as she made them for her journey to Poland. She has been always gently cheerful, and she is cheerful now. When she overhears the people about her bed making fine suggestions of the means Government might employ to make the masses happy, she rouses herself to say: "*Ajoutez-y le soin de procurer les plaisirs.*" It is her last recorded utterance.

The character of Madame Geoffrin is quite simple. She is less a great woman than a good one. A great woman is



the phoenix who rises from the ashes of her sex's littleness once in a thousand years; and is in proportion to great men about one to a hundred. Madame does not electrify the world. But she leaves her corner of it fairer, kinder, wiser; makes by her character and influence a cool oasis, very pleasant to rest in, in the desert of French philosophism, atheism and immorality.

A thousand stories are told of her generosity, her tact, her honesty. The very people whom her *bourgeois* decorum and soberness must most reproach cannot but like her. "I am so crazy, and she is so prudent," writes Gallani to Madame Necker. "Still I love her, I esteem her, I reverence her, I adore her." Others, if none more contemptible and licentious than the witty abbé, have the same feeling.

Horace Walpole calls her his director, his confessor, the embodiment of common-sense. To be censured by the Sorbonne or shut up in the Bastille for one's violent opinions is almost the only form of folly Madame can't forgive her friends.

Quiet is the chief of her household gods. Speaking to Diderot of a lawsuit that was bothering her: "Get done with my lawsuit," says she. "They want money? I have it. Give them money. What better use can I make of my money than to buy peace with it?"

She does indeed make better uses of it even than that. She is the most generous woman in history. It is she who allows Mademoiselle de Lespinasse, who has no kind of claim upon her, a pension for life. It is she who pays Poniatowski's debts when he first comes, a young man and a foolish one, to Paris. When she visits her friends it is her tender pleasure to look round their rooms and see what is wanting to completeness, and afterwards to contribute a piece of old china, a pic-

ture, a couch or a bureau. She has such a delight in giving that he would be surly indeed who could refuse to accept.

To Morellet and to Thomas she makes a sufficient allowance "*pour leur faire une existence indépendante.*" How many more of those poor devils of authors who frequent her Salon, and have such very fine notions on life, and so very little idea how to live, she helps from that wide purse and heart one can only guess. One Sunday—on Sundays she does not receive her friends—one of them takes her by surprise, and finds her doing up a considerable sum of money in little bags for distribution among the poor. It is her regular Sunday occupation. For here in evil Paris, with its great gulf fixed between class and class, there are so many sick who need the necessities—of death—so many orphaned babies, so many despairing women! If Madame, who does "good by stealth," is convicted of so much kindness, how much more must there be of which no one knows! She is fond of quoting that Eastern proverb, "*Si tu fais du bien jette-le dans la mer, et si les poissons l'avalent Dieu s'en souviendra;*" and when she is found out in goodness, past denial, excuses herself by saying, with her gay little smile, she has only "*l'humeur donnante.*"

But she has, indeed, that nobler generosity of soul of which giving is but a small part. It is Madame who first stretches out a hand of friendship to Madame Necker, whom, as yet, the other women won't accept. And it is Madame who remains her friend when the Necker, who is besides, young and handsome, presides over a dangerously successful rival Salon. It is Madame Geoffrin who is, in brief, beloved of women, though she is also beloved of men; who cannot bear the false change of compliments, eulogy, flattery, and clings instead to the frank affection of

that generous youth to whom, as to childhood, all men are equal and all the world seems kind.

There is no prettier picture than that Madame herself draws, with her natural illiterate pen, in one of the letters to Stanislas. Among her closest friends are a troop of laughing girls, who come and take her by surprise when they want to be amused. It is not, one sees here, volatile youth that is to cheer old age, but this gently gay old age (*"Mon cœur n'a que vingt ans,"* says Madame) which is to make youth merrier yet. One may imagine the scene. They cluster round her, chattering and impulsive. They are so light-hearted and demonstrative, so eager to make confidences, so susceptible of influence! They have come to stay *ever* so long. They must insist on having supper with her—on spending the lengthiest and gayest of evenings. At their head is a girlish Madame d'Egmont—twenty years old at the most—who is quite irresistible, says Madame, when she looks up into one's face and talks, and who has "a grace and vivacity which neither sculpture nor painting shall portray." The description of her is so charming that Stanislas wants her portrait. She dies, poor soul!

*Longman's Magazine.*

in the sequel, still only a girl, and childless. On that evening death and disaster must seem far enough off. For Madame, though she is old and has suffered, has the supreme unselfishness which communicates all its joys and keeps its sorrows to itself. She laughs with her visitors and scolds them tenderly after her fashion—"I scold them on the way they waste their youth," she says, "and preach to them that they may have an old age as bright and healthy as mine"—and gives them, perhaps, that sententious little maxim which they all laugh at delightfully at the moment, and think over a little afterwards: "There are three things that the women of Paris throw out of the window—their time, their health and their money."

Is it not a pretty, natural little scene in the coarse, clever, artificial drama of this French eighteenth century? Madame Geoffrin is in her own person a witness to the quiet good that always lives on through the worst periods of noisy vice. She should be remembered forever, if only as the type and voice of those silent multitudes who follow duty in the basest age, and in the teeth of a low public opinion struggle towards ideals not mean.

*S. G. Tallentyre.*

---

## THE TYRANNY OF CORRESPONDENCE.

The classic age of letter-writing, like that of chivalry, is gone, although no Burke has been found yet to utter its splendid funeral oration. It is of course true that more letters are written every day in England now than were written every year a century ago, even taking into consideration the difference in population. But there are letters and letters. Correspondence on business, hurried notes containing in-

vitations to dinner or acceptances thereof—these are the missives which fill the bag of the letter-carrier. No, there is one kind of correspondence that, even in our days of telephones and phonographs, is immortal. The love-letter, we presume, still holds its sway; and if we are to judge from the revelations of breach of promise cases, is as full of sugary sentimentalism as in the days of Lydia Languish. But the

letter as it has passed into literature, the letter whose highest claim to be treated as art is that it conceals art, the letter as written by William Cowper, or Oliver Goldsmith, or Horace Walpole, or Miss Burney—that charming epistle intended only for the affectionate perusal of friends, and yet of such value to the historian of life and manners—shall we say that it has disappeared from the busy modern world, killed by the “railway and the steamship and the thoughts that shake mankind?” At least it is now but a rare product, a fragile flower scarcely able to maintain itself in our altered social soil.

Correspondence from being a cherished art and solace has in our day tended to become what is called in slang a “grind.” It is “snippety,” like the cheap newspapers, a sort of “bits” or “cuts,” giving hints which require to be filled out, only that the receiver has hardly time for that mental process. Doubtless there are here and there quiet persons who still cherish the implied conviction of White of Selborne, that the budding of a new flower, or the spring arrival of another bird from the south, is as important an event as the Anglo-German agreement or the Presidential Election, but the recent books on these themes, interesting as some of them are, will all be forgotten while our still distant ancestors are reading the correspondence of the Selborne parson. Truth to tell, a great deal of our letter-writing is boredom, the source of irritation and weariness to those who are called on to undertake it. We are reminded of this by the somewhat pathetic letter from Mr. Herbert Spencer, printed in the *New York Journal*, in which the philosopher begs to be excused from replying to correspondents on the ground that in his declining years he has no time or energy for writing on all manner of difficult subjects to all the persons who

either genuinely desire enlightenment or who (as is more probable) wish to “draw” an eminent thinker and perhaps preserve his autograph in their collection.

It is one of the misfortunes of the modern rapid transmission of news and thought that, while destroying the old leisure which made the artistic letter possible, it has made thousands of people acquainted with the great writers of our time in a hurried, superficial kind of way, creating a morbid desire for controverting what are supposed to be their views, or for suggesting to them points which they may not have considered, and which are probably utterly irrelevant. Not a living writer but has had experience of his “crank.” Even to reply to him in the celebrated words of Dr. Johnson, “Sir, I have given you arguments, I cannot provide you with an understanding,” costs pen, ink and paper, and usually a postage stamp, which the correspondent rarely furnishes. But to enter on a serious campaign of letter-writing with all and sundry costs a loss of time, an expenditure of energy, and, in some cases, a friction of the nervous system which no statistics can adequately express. This tyranny of correspondence is, it may be urged, a condition of intellectual greatness; it is one of the penalties a great writer has to pay. But it might surely be assumed that the writer has said what he has to say in his book; that is what he wrote it for, and if he never thought of some hint or argument which his correspondent is good enough to suggest to him, he is not quite the great writer he is taken for. In any case, his shortcomings are sure to be pointed out by a critic of his own calibre in a work which he can quietly study in his library free from the intrusion of bores and spies. A still worse form of this tyranny which the cheap postal system has made possible is the letter

which demands one's views of particular subjects with which he does not profess, and never has professed, to deal. A man of letters uses tobacco, or drinks old port, or walks ten miles a day, or reads sensational novels, and instantly hundreds of persons who have heard of the fact bombard him with letters asking the reason why. One imagines that there are some writers who do not venerate the memory of Rowland Hill.

But there is, let it be frankly admitted, another side to this question of correspondence, as there is to nearly every fact in this imperfect world. You are rendered almost insane by the click, click of the telephone, and are willing to curse its inventor, and to subscribe to a fund for its destruction. But next door some father may be blessing this very instrument for instantaneous news of his dying child. The same postbag which contains the deadly missive of the bore may also hold the well-considered and intelligent thanks of the serious student; and what more grateful message for the writer than that? The literary review can never be quite so delightful as the personal communication from a student who takes the trouble to tell you how much he owes to you. Think what Goethe's letter to Carlyle must have meant amid all the dull, unenlightened chatter of the English reviews. Even the "trivial fond records," of the aver-

age domestic letter constitute an important part of one's life. The tendency in our time is to scattering. Families do not live in the old-fashioned solidarity, but go to the ends of the earth, break up, separate far and wide. Science, which has produced this new exodus, has also in part provided that, if bodily separation there must be, there shall at least be no separation of mind. The ship which bears the emigrant from his old home also bears the letters from the father and mother, the old friends, and so the continuity of life is maintained. The threads of human association are kept together. Not a few of these letters, rough and broken as they are, are veritable human documents; if we could collect them, we might find that their contemplation was by no means beneath the "dignity of history." If the letter as a leisurely artistic product is largely a thing of the past, the letter as a distinct, spontaneous expression of individual thought and feeling, the outcome of widespread ability to read and write, and of the inventions of modern science, is a great fact which has added permanently to the happiness of the many. To the thinker, whose daily work lies in writing, correspondence must be in the main a tyranny; to those who labor in the office or the shop it is a kind of liberation from the drudgery of the daily round.

*The Spectator.*

---

### A MEADOW.

There is a meadow in the West,  
Green, open to the sun and air:  
A thrill of joy, a throbbing breast,  
I could not cross it but in prayer.

It glittered like a fleece of gold,  
And every blade of grass was bright:

*A Meadow.*

Each drooping bud was aureoled,  
And every blossom crowned with light.

And leaning from their leafy nook  
Moon-daisies, in the crimson glow  
Would gaze upon the gliding brook  
And watch the star of love below.

I drank of that love-haunted stream  
Whose water hath no bitter lees,  
And walked with God as in a dream  
Beneath the dark, melodious trees.

And, thronging through the twilight air,  
The dead, the living, e'en as one,  
Would gather round me wandering there  
Beside the rivulet alone.

They sang of legends dim and old  
Ere this mysterious world began,  
Of earthquake, storm, and fire they told,  
And of the still small voice in man.

They sang me songs of love: they sang  
Of broken hearts and wild farewells:  
And every note of anguish rang  
Like the deep sob of distant bells.

Then floated a triumphant strain  
From highest heaven,—now soft, now loud—  
Sweeter than skylarks after rain  
That sing above an April cloud.

And soaring to'ard the distant gleam,  
And singing as they passed from sight  
The rack and rainbow of my dream  
Dissolved and faded into light:

Faded: and fainter one by one  
Their voices reached me from afar:  
Till, over the green meadow shone  
Only the shepherd's evening star.

*The Spectator.*

*Gascoigne Mackie.*